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ABOUT ENGLAND

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# About ENGLAND

Mary By Vivian  
M. V. HUGHES



1927

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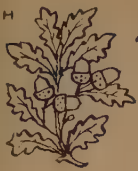
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SECTION I  
SOME GENERAL FEATURES







# ABOUT ENGLAND

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

ENGLAND is not well known to the English people. A hundred years ago a man from Yorkshire was almost a foreigner to a man from Devon. And to-day, although the language is more alike, and travelling has been revolutionised, the dweller in a country town or village knows little of other country towns and villages, and never suspects how deep their interest may be. He may often be ignorant of the very things in his own High Street, or in his own village church. What we want is a fresh eye—the eye of a stranger.

Now the following chapters are addressed to such an English person, treating him exactly as if he were a foreign visitor, or someone from our overseas Dominions, just landed, or imagine yourself, say an American, with plenty of time and money, on a comfortably long visit; or else an exile from South Africa, who has saved up just enough for an inexpensive month or two at “home”; or a Frenchman on a visit for a week. Then with the map of England before you, try to approach the country with his eyes.

To visit a strange country successfully is in itself a work of art. The skill required is mainly a skill in omission, in avoiding those things (marvellous and pleasant in themselves) which are common to all

civilised countries, or which really belong to some other country. Thus, a fine hotel, a spacious theatre, a well-run hospital, an express train—all such things may be seen in any well-conducted country. Again, Italian art is best looked for in Italy, Egyptian remains in Egypt, Greek temples in Greece. Science is entirely cosmopolitan.

So then, unless you have some very definite scientific or artistic point to elucidate, it is wiser to keep away from bewildering museums and picture galleries, and to make for everything that is peculiarly English.

Everything in England is paradoxical, and, to begin with a paradox, you will find that it saves time to walk or go in a bus, than to use a taxi or the tube. The more slowly you move about, the more you see. The top of a bus, especially when the traffic is continually being held up, is a fine vantage-ground for observation of a hundred things.

In any case, whether your stay is a day or a year, hurry is fatal. Hurry closes the eyes, as may be observed when we are hunting for something in a hurry; it is often under our nose or even in our hand. So, a saunter down Fleet Street, or a bus drive into Surrey, may teach you more of England than a week of feverish visits to famous spots.

It has been supposed that this planet is used by the others as a lunatic asylum. Similarly, visitors to England may think that the other countries have used England in the same way. The author of our literary masterpiece, *Hamlet*, seemed to hold such an opinion. One thing is certain, whatever else England may be, it is never dull; there is no corner of it but is rich in oddity of some kind. No matter what your special taste may be, literature, art, business, scenery, geology,

or language, England will afford you something that cannot be seen anywhere else.

The things that are peculiarly English are roughly three:

*Scenery.* Not so grand, imposing, or strange as in many other countries, but full of old associations, and in almost all directions peaceful, and lovely in colour.

*History.* The little island oozes with history at every pore.

*Sport.* We may be beaten by another country in any kind of sport, but no country can beat us in our interest in every form of it, our reverence for its spirit, our hospitality to those who come to compete with us, and our delight in them when they lay us out.

Fix then your eye on some *one* thing in one of these departments—for instance, Bridges, in Scenery; the Roman period in History; Boxing, in Sport—and let everything centre round this main objective.

Keep at your base a large rough map of England, and another of London, and mark every evening the places you have seen. Keep a notebook for odd names of streets, villages, inns, strange words, idioms, metaphors. Keep a sketch-book (pocket size) for graphic notes, no matter how badly you draw.

The chief charm of England is that it is not yet civilised. In general, we are uncommonly like our rude forefathers. If you plunge into the country, and avoid the high-roads, you can easily be lost, for villages appear to have no names, roads may lead anywhere, and the natives speak in a way that is hard to understand. There is a story of one of our adventurous buses, advertising an expedition to Little Puddleton, one Good Friday. The driver lost himself amid

by-roads and lanes, but seeing at last a wayside inn, he determined (in collusion with the conductor) to call it Little Puddleton. The passengers were quite happy over it, and all returned to town in blissful ignorance as to where they had really been.

Now, alas, useful information, signposts, names of villages, petrol supplies, postcards and other modern inconveniences are spreading like an insidious disease. May you be in time to get beyond their limit.

### BOOKS

*The Old Country*, by E. Rhys (Dent).

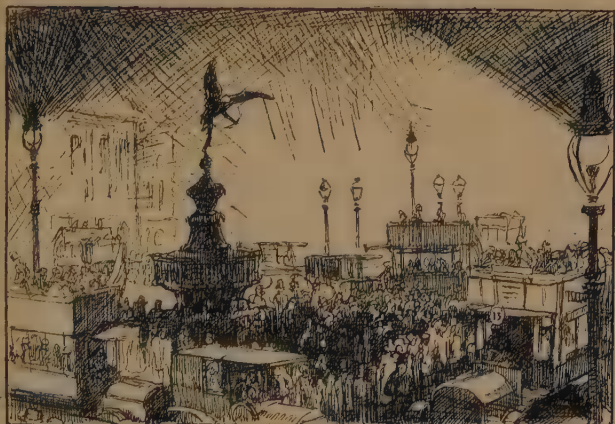
*Land's End*, by W. H. Hudson (Dent).

*Hampshire*, by W. H. Hudson (Dent).

*Downland*, by W. H. Hudson (Dent).

*Afoot in England*, by W. H. Hudson (Dent).





## CHAPTER II

### THE WEATHER

ENGLAND is said to have no climate—only weather; and according to the Americans, the weather is only in sample packets. Its variety and uncertainty have had some good effects on our character, if not on our crops. Englishmen are so used to extremes of heat and cold, to such sudden changes, to being caught in the wrong kind of clothes, that they have been able to colonise any part of the world and explore the most forbidding regions; for life at home has always been a series of improvisations and “muddling” through till a turn for the better comes. The weather also gives them that splendid safety-valve for ill-temper—something to grumble at. It affords them too an endless topic of conversation, and occasion for some grim jests. Certain places are selected for these. Thus of Plymouth it has been maliciously said that she enjoys “six months’ bad weather and six months’

rain"; also, "her natives have webbed feet, and life-belts are carried on her tram-cars."

Our special pride is a fog. This is called "pea-soup" or "a London particular." It is supposed that Philip of Spain, the husband of Mary, who refused to pay a second visit to England, must have encountered such a fog. We hear also of the delighted surprise of the Frenchman, who had always puzzled over the saying that the sun never sets on the British dominions; when he landed in a fog he exclaimed: "I see it now. He never rise."

"Fog everywhere. Fog up the river, where it flows among green aits; fog down the river, where it rolls defiled among the tiers of shipping, and the waterside pollutions of a great (and dirty) city. Fog on the Essex marches, fog on the Kentish heights. Fog creeping into the cabooses of collier-brigs; fog lying out on the yards and hovering in the rigging of great ships; fog dropping on the gunwales of barges and small boats. Fog in the eyes and throats of ancient Greenwich pensioners, wheezing by the firesides of their wards; fog in the stem and bowl of the afternoon pipe of the wrathful skipper, down in his close cabin; fog cruelly pinching the toes and fingers of his shivering little 'prentice boy on deck. Chance people on the bridges peeping over the parapets into a nether sky of fog, with fog all round them, as if they were a balloon, and hanging in the misty clouds" (DICKENS).

The fog is almost as great a leveller as Death itself; the finest automobile is helpless, and the beggar gets on as well as the millionaire. Mr. Bone (in his *London Perambulator*<sup>1</sup>) recalls a fog incident that sounds

<sup>1</sup> *The London Perambulator*, by James Bone, illustrated by Muirhead Bone (Jonathan Cape).

almost mediaeval. "Only twenty years ago a man going home about midnight in a fog, saw a glare of torches, and a body of men passed, with King Edward walking in the middle. The torches were carried by footmen and policemen; then came the King, heavily wrapped up, with two of his gentlemen; then more policemen, then some stragglers of the night, attracted by curiosity or the chance of a safe guide to Buckingham Palace."

Perhaps it is our climate that makes us so reserved. Dire indeed must be the situation (a railway accident, a world-wide war, the crack of doom) when one stranger will speak to another. You may ask the way, or the time, or borrow a match. No more. People will stand in theatre queues, sit in dentists' ante-rooms, go long journeys—and never speak.

The chief point to remember in planning any expedition (whether for a month, a week, or a day) is that however good, or bad, the weather seems, it is sure not to last. It is wise to wear a hat that will not be spoiled by rain, will not blow off, will not be too heavy; and it is well to carry some extra coat or wrap, in case it "turns colder," as it invariably does. Of our weather it may be said: "Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose."

An "early" writer appears, in the following lines, to have discouraged expeditions of all kinds, chiefly on account of the uncertainty of our climatic conditions:

When y<sup>e</sup> Morning riseth redde  
Rise not Thou, but keepe thy Bedde.  
If y<sup>e</sup> Sky is dull and gray  
Still 'tis beste in Bedde to stay.

Is it full of Mistes and Raine?

'Tis a hint to doze againe.

Is it neither fine nor wette?

Waite until y<sup>e</sup> Weather's sette.

London journalists generally describe their city as being "in the grip" of something: it is in the grip of a fog, or in the grip of a frost; in the grip of a heat wave, or of a snow-storm. . . . We might, in short, be said, as a country, to be always in the grip of uncertainty and change. A glance at yesterday's weather at our health resorts, published every day in *The Times*, will illustrate this. If "happy" means ready for whatever may happen, we may be described as a happy nation.

The old gibe, that we English take our pleasures sadly, has another side to it, for it must be admitted that we take our troubles gaily. On a bright spring morning, an occasional smile may break loose; but for sheer hilarity and universal bonhomie, give us a disaster. We grumble continually at everything, but the moment there is anything that seems to invite grumbling, we look askance at a man who shows a poor mouth. He has not the sporting instinct, we feel. All grumbling is immediately taboo; we smile on one another; we even speak to one another.

A good instance of this is shown during a serious strike. Miners may be fighting employers, trains and buses may be idle while everyone is desperate to get to work . . . but rich and poor help one another without the slightest regard to opinions or sides.

Consider, then, whether a bloody revolution would ever be possible here. Laughter and good humour would blow it away in ten minutes, for those marked for the guillotine will be giving lifts in their cars to

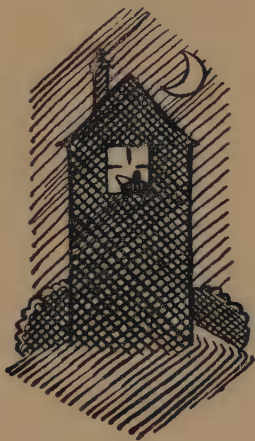


the cut-throats. One would hesitate to cut the throat of a man who had just obliged you with a lift.

On the whole, then, our weather is not such a drawback as it seems, and to those who have a real love of nature all weather is beautiful, and its constant changes are in themselves a delight.

## BOOK

*Our Weather*, by W. Marriott and J. S. Fowler  
(Dent).





### CHAPTER III

#### SOME OF OUR CONQUERORS

THE English have the credit for being world-wide conquerors and land-grabbers; for desiring to manage other nations; for being self-satisfied and insular; for refusing to learn any language but their own. It is curious, therefore, to consider how often England has herself been conquered, and what a variety of foreign tongues have combined to make her language. It is not only our colonial cousins who will feel at home on a visit to England. Italians may well wear a superior smile, and say, "Men from our country were the first to civilise you, when they paid you that little visit of four hundred years." "Roman Britain" is now a special subject of study in our universities, Roman remains are to be found in almost every region, and fresh finds are continually being reported.

Chester, St. Albans, Bath, are perhaps the richest in this respect, but you need not go farther than London to see a real Roman bath, complete with water from a spring. Dickens is said to have had many a plunge in it. Find St. Mary-le-Strand Church; follow a narrow passage opposite it, on the south side of the Strand, and you will find the bath a little way down on the left. The water is icy cold, but two Englishmen bathe in it every morning, so that it is not a "museum" thing, but a real bit of ancient Rome in London life.

More valuable than roads or baths is a trait in our character which we seem to have absorbed from the Romans. It can best be described, perhaps, as "masterly inactivity." We leave one another alone. We like to be left alone. We cannot bear to be interfered with by neighbour or by Government. It is due to this characteristic that we have been able to build up our empire, and it looks as though we learnt the trick from the Romans. To judge by the Germans, it is not a Teutonic characteristic, and no one who has travelled much in Wales or Cornwall will say it is a Celtic one. In these parts your business is their business. They will not even tell you the way, till they have heard where you come from.

Someone has ingeniously suggested that we have a "Roman remain" in our annually recurring disappointment with our summer. Had it not been for them, we should have looked upon our miserable Junes and Julys as our proper portion. The Romans, however, in their visit of a few hundred years always expected an Italian summer to arrive, and never ceased being annoyed at its failure, and we took on their view of the matter.

Then the Germans conquered us. Oh, yes. After the Romans had retired according to plan, the various German tribes who visited our shores made themselves so completely at home, that those of us who had not fled to the west accepted their name and language. We ourselves are "German remains." So that, *si monumentum requiris, circumspice*. Saxon speech, Saxon laws, old Saxon churches—all are treasured by antiquarians. They did not encourage the kind of civilisation that the Romans had implanted; in fact they introduced rather rough manners and methods, but

we owe to them that sturdy self-sufficiency and indifference to the opinions of others, that thickness of skin, and staying power, that have served us so well in many a struggle, and above all that language which we lovingly call "plain English." We needed men of Italy once more to soften our roughness, and they sent us Christianity again, which had suffered a setback.

The men of France, too, conquered us so completely that we call their advent "The Conquest" *par excellence*. They, too, civilised us. The remains of their massive and beautiful buildings are regarded with great reverence, and bid fair to last for many another century. Their language had a stand-up fight with ours, and the two are now inseparably blended, so that, even if you try to speak "plain English," it is almost impossible to get through a sentence without using a word that we owe to Norman French. An indelible relic of the time when the Frenchman was "top-dog" over here and we Saxons were under-dogs is noticeable in several of our words. The conquered race looked after the animals in field and yard, while their masters knew nothing much about them till they were dressed for the table. So we find Saxon words for the live creatures, French words for the meat. Thus: sheep—mutton; ox—beef; pig, sow, hog—pork; calf—veal. Bacon was the kind of meat that the peasants were allowed; also the inferior parts of any animal. Notice in the shops you hear of loin of *veal*, but *calf's* head, feet, *pig's* trotters, *ox* tongue, and so on. The word "venison" is particularly aristocratic, as it means "any meat obtained from the chase" (Lat. *venatio*). For a note about the swan as a food, see chapter xxvii.

It is difficult for us to realise, as we look at a map of the world, that little Denmark kept us for years in

abject terror, sent four successive kings to rule over us, and left signs of her occupation all along the north-east of England. But of course the whole of Scandinavia is implied under the terms Danes and Northmen. To them probably we owe our adventurous spirit and the urge to sea-roving. On Wednesdays and Thursdays we all commemorate their gods every week.

The Spanish attack was regarded as a great peril and a grand fight we had, providing endless themes for romantic literature. One curious Spanish relic may be seen. The people in the Shetland Isles make deliciously warm and soft woollen garments, chiefly grey and brown. But one of the islands, called Fair Island, turns them out in brilliant colours. In the flight of the Armada (1588) a Spanish vessel was wrecked on this island, and the Spaniards who were saved settled down and taught the inhabitants how to dye their wool in these lovely Southern colours. So much the fashion are these dyed woollen garments at present, that a Spanish visitor may feel quite at home in watching young athletes in their gay "pull-overs" and jumpers.

Apologies are due to both Spain and Italy for the curious fact that school-children are inclined to claim Columbus as an English adventurer. They are taught carefully about his birthplace in Genoa, his unworthy treatment by our Henry VII., and his work for Ferdinand and Isabella. In spite of all, they claim him.

Just as the Dutch conquered the sea by dyking their own country, so they helped us to conquer ours. A large tract of land round the Wash, parts of Lincoln, Cambridge and Norfolk, is exceedingly flat and low-lying. One portion is called "Holland," and here

Dutch settlers built dykes; here, too, they built Dutch houses which may still be seen, and grew bulbs. Just as France gave us a king, both wise and strong, in William I., so did Holland, in William III.

Huguenots from France, and refugees from Flanders, repaid our hospitality by teaching us to weave our wool, and their descendants may be known by their French names and the fairly common name of "Flemming," not to speak of a certain religious austerity that has lingered since the days of persecution.

Hadrian's Wall is far away in the north, but anyone with time and money to spare should go and see these seventy-three miles of ancient masonry. Whatever his European nationality, there is a chance that some ancestor of his was set to guard this wall, when Rome sent a man from the Euphrates to the Tyne as readily as we send one from Wales to Shanghai. A Jewish visitor should not fail to look at the coin of Titus (now in the Blackgate Museum of Newcastle) with its inscription "Judæa Capta"—one of the finds of the wall.

The Jews stand in a very peculiar relation to Christian countries. Generally mentioned as opposed to Christians, they lose with most people the credit for having given us our religion. They certainly must be reckoned among our conquerors, for Christianity conquered the pagan rites of Saxon England, and the ancient Jewish literature has dominated English ideas for centuries. Our Bible is a heritage from the Jewish race.

By the Greeks we have been conquered, just as the Romans were, just as all the world has been, not by force of arms nor by peaceful penetration. With a fine indifference to results, the Greeks were content to

think and do and be. All that is best in our Art, our Literature, even our Science, seems to have been inspired by the Greeks. There was much fuss about finding that the world was a sphere, that it was not the centre of the universe, and so forth. But the Greeks had found these things out long before, and their ideas survived even the Dark Ages.

The work of this conquest is a very slow one, as you will admit when you have been round the British Museum, and then look at the statues in the streets; some of the very latest are unbelievable. And then compare the Tanagra figures with the ornaments in our drawing-rooms. But the conquest is proceeding steadily. After all, what is a century or two? Meanwhile our best brains are being inspired by Greek Literature, or are carrying on (often unconsciously) the Greek scientific impetus.

### BOOK

*Tales of our Ancestors* (3 vols.). W. P. Drury (Dent).





HAMPTON COURT PALACE

## CHAPTER IV

### ENGLISH SCENERY

THE Englishman is not patriotic, in the ordinary sense of the word. He cares little what anyone thinks about his country, he thinks little about it himself, he does not beg a stranger to give his "impression" of it. The late war was said to have worked a miracle, in making the French religious, the Russians sober, and the English patriotic. But on one point an Englishman is very sensitive; he cannot bear people to think slightly of the county to which he belongs. It is the finest of all the counties. Two strangers from the same county will be immediately friendly, and exaggerate their provincial manner of speech. Poems that extol special counties are sure of a warm reception. The visitor from a foreign land is therefore obliged to judge for himself as to the beauty spots, since no one who directs him will be unbiassed. By a kind of



curious jealousy, an Englishman cannot bear to see strangers visiting and admiring his county and would rather induce them to visit any other. The present writer will be very careful to hide any leaning to a special county.

Each of the Home Counties (those lying near London: Middlesex, Essex, Hertfordshire, Surrey, Sussex and Kent) has a special attraction of its own. Surrey, more justly perhaps than the other claimants to the title, is often called the Garden of England, with its wooded hills and dales, picturesque villages and fine views; Hertford is famous for its lanes, Essex has Epping Forest. The fertile Kent is a model of well-ordered crops. Sussex has wide stretches of rolling downs, with curious little villages and ancient churches. All these counties are within easy motor-car drives from London. The best way to see something of them quite cheaply is to mount on the top of almost any omnibus on a fine day, just taking your chance, and stay there. Many London streets must be passed before the open country is reached, but even these are full of an interest of their own. Great contrast will be observed between the routes of buses going east and going west. For study of social conditions, go east. For reaching the country more quickly, go west. Handy little guidebooks can be obtained at any bookstall, giving the number and exact route of each bus service.

If you wish to see the greatest stretch of typical English scenery in the shortest amount of time, an express journey on the Great Western Railway can hardly be bettered. Very soon after leaving Paddington the train is running through all the kind of countryside that is associated with "sleepy old England"—thick

hedges dividing, in most erratic fashion, fields that vary in colour from bright green or rich yellow to soft browns and purples, well-fed lazy cattle, red-roofed farmhouses, grey churches, wooded hills, narrow lanes winding away into the landscape, and every now and again the reaches of the Thames. The towns of Bath and Bristol (if the northern route is taken) give a fine contrast between a "pleasure" place and a "busy" place. A little farther on is Exeter, one of our most fascinating cathedral cities, with its Guildhall, Priory of St. Nicholas, and endless beauty spots in the neighbourhood.

Soon after leaving Exeter, the train skirts the sea coast, so close that at high tide you seem to be almost in the sea. The train wriggles in and out of the red sandstone cliffs, giving sudden and tantalising views of the sea that disappear all too soon. Plymouth is one of our chief naval stations, and it was on Plymouth Hoe that Drake was playing his game of bowls when the Armada arrived. It was from Plymouth that he started to go round the world, it was to Plymouth that he returned, and from Plymouth the Pilgrim Fathers set sail in the *Mayflower*.

To get into the Elizabethan spirit in Plymouth, some of the old houses in New Street, and at the corner of Pin Lane, should be seen; for many of them were there in Drake's time, and they are interesting examples of the overhanging upper stories and tiny-paned windows of that period. The little promontory of Mount Batten is where Drake started out on that memorable July night in 1588, to meet the Armada.

Children will like to hear the story of Drake's return from his voyage round the world. He had been away three years, and everyone had given him up for

lost. Now, one Sunday, people were all (or most of them) in church, and the sermon was going on, when a whisper went round, "Drake is come back." Very quietly people stole out, but began to run down to the shore, first one by one, then in bold groups till the church was empty, for the preacher was only too glad to stop his sermon and run down to see Drake too.

If there is no time to wander about Plymouth, Drake and his little ships must just be thought about, especially when the Hamoaze is reached. This is the lovely name for the estuary of the Tamar, where several of our great grey battleships may be seen. Then we leave "England" by the Albert Bridge, and are in the country of the Celts. The difference between the rich Devon land and the ruder scenery of Cornwall, with its lonely little whitewashed cottages, can be immediately perceived.

Stops are more frequent now, and there is a chance to hear the soft speech of the west-country people at the stations. Farther on, the landscape is dotted with the desolate-looking little towers that mark the spots where tin-mines flourished. At any station as you draw near Penzance, you can stop your journey and visit the famous Cornish coast, with its deep blue sea, dangerous cliffs and tremendous breakers. The probability is that you will now sacrifice your return-half ticket, and settle in Cornwall for good. Stretching out into the Atlantic with its two magnificent headlands of Land's End and Lizard, its very geography is romantic, and its history is the oldest in the islands. Cornwall is undoubtedly the most interesting county and its people are the most lovable. A walking tour round the coast makes a perfect holiday, for health, history, or just happiness. For combination of pleasures, and

things English, get a horse and canter along the grassy path by the edge of the steep cliffs, with the Atlantic on one side, and the purple heather on the other.

Wales affords attractions of quite a different kind. A student of language will be interested in visiting a bi-lingual people. Among the farmers and market-women in the trains, among the children in the streets, in the churches and chapels, he will hear plenty of Welsh; but everyone (except in some remote farms on the hills) can speak English as well. It is one of England's jests that no one can pronounce Welsh; but in truth it is far easier than English, for every letter has one definite sound, and "w" is a vowel, sounding like "oo." Stress the penult and there you are. Remember that "ll" is something like "thl," and then try this name: Llwyngwrl.

It must be a real lover of mountains who goes to Wales, one who will not regard rain, mist and cloud as disagreeable. There are frequently cloudless, sunny days, especially in September, but these must not be relied on; and Wales must be loved in all her moods. Take a train from Euston for Machynlleth, and then go on the toy railway, through a valley with a rushing trout stream, and overhanging trees, winding among the hills, to Corris. There are plentiful expeditions to be made, to Cader and past Tal-y-llyn. Be sure to walk from Dolgelly to Barmouth; this is considered the most beautiful walk in the world, and the second best is from Barmouth to Dolgelly. In such rural spots as these you get at the heart of Wales far more than if you visit the tourist-ridden Llandudno, Snowdon and Aberystwyth.

For seeing a variety of English life in one area, Yorkshire might well be chosen. The town of York



Henry J. Howard

Selborne

from the Hanger.

with its Minster will provide historic interest, and excursions can be made to Fountains Abbey, Bolton Abbey and Whitby. Walking tours through beech woods, over the moors, or on the Pennine Hills, will harden the muscles and increase the appetite for hearty Yorkshire meals. Leeds, Bradford, Sheffield, Middlesbrough, Doncaster, will provide ample material for the eager engineer and manufacturer, as well as for the social reformer. Hull is a typical seaport, Scarborough a fashionable seaside resort, and Harrogate an inland spa. All this, and much more, within the bounds of a single county—almost a little nation in itself.

The lovers of flat country, and devotees of leisurely life in a sailing-boat, should spend a holiday on the Norfolk Broads—and a more delightful prolonged picnic could hardly be devised—a contrast in every way to a strenuous walking tour in the Pennines or in Wales. Here you get up on a chair to see the view; and if either Ely or Lincoln Cathedral can be seen in the distance, it must be visited. If (for private ends) you are at Cambridge, a motor-boat trip down the river to Ely makes a good afternoon, especially if you can lasso a don or a canon to give you some guidance. These learned men never oppress you with too much; they themselves are bored with their knowledge, and digging it out of them has all the excitement of an otter hunt.

A peculiar feature of English scenery is the hedge. Fields are divided from each other in a wholly irregular way by these thick growths of thorn and bramble, often tall enough to shelter the cattle from the sun in summer and the sheep from cold winds in winter. Wild flowers grow among them in profusion, and in

the month of September they often yield a rich harvest of blackberries, to the great delight of the children. The hedges are at the height of their beauty in the spring, when great stretches of them are white with may-blossom, or in June when the wild roses are out.

In some parts, such as Yorkshire and Wales, the divisions between the fields are made by loose stones, roughly constructed into low walls. In Cornwall, low walls of boulders are used, all overgrown with tiny ivy, honeysuckle, ragged robin and mosses. Children love to run along the top, and it is a great game to see how far you can keep up, without coming down for a gap or a gate. The Cornish stiles, too, are unlike those in other counties; they consist of long stone boulders laid across a deep hole and speak well for the sobriety of the natives.

The historical student will see in hedges something more than beauty. They represent the development of "several" husbandry out of the old "champion" system. In early days the farming was done by co-operation, and the animals fed on the common ground—the country was open. The plague of 1349 made tremendous changes; labourers were scarce, and sheep-rearing took the place of much of the agriculture. Lands were enclosed, and hedges began. A full account of the Black Death and its consequences is given by Dr. Milne in his *From Guild to Factory*.

Here and there you will see a double hedge, with a narrow grassy path between. This is a part of the boundary of a former deer park. A deer might leap over one hedge with some ease, and if he got into this narrow path, he could be reclaimed, but if he managed to leap the double hedge, anyone might catch him and turn him into venison. These double

hedges were called "deer-leaps." That it was a common thing to poach deer in the days when many large parks maintained them, is familiar to us from the legend of young Shakespeare being arrested for deer-stealing.

The difficulty of penning animals is a real one, and sometimes insuperable. The beautiful tiny mountain sheep of Wales have to jump many awkward places in order to find their bits of good pasture. There is no use in penning them, because there is not enough rich grass in one place to support them. So they are branded with their owner's name, and wander at large, as though wild. (Indeed there is the story of the Frenchman out shooting, who found the grouse "too difficile," but brought home "des moutons sauvages—six.") An English farmer once, impressed by the demand for Welsh mutton, bought two score and brought them home to his own farm to fatten, turned them into a nice field, and went to bed. In the morning there was not a vestige of them to be seen.

It is curious how characteristic each county is. A man who knows England fairly well—say, a commercial traveller—would be able to give a fair guess as to which county he was in, if he were dropped from an aeroplane, and allowed a few minutes to look round. If you take a railway journey through Kent (a very likely thing to happen to you), you will get scenery unlike that of any other county. You will pass mile after mile of orchard, the trees arranged with mathematical precision, and then again mile after mile of hops. Anything neater than Kent would be impossible to imagine. East Kent, with its old ports and beautiful old villages, is said to be the most English bit of England. Go and wander about it before the coal-



fields begin to be worked. If tall smoking chimneys take the place of the picturesque oast-houses, it will be a sad day for every Englishman who cares about his country.

The commons of England would require a treatise to themselves, so full of interest are they, both historically and for their beauty. One of the finest is fortunately within quite a short distance of London, at Berkhamsted (Herts). On this common you may wander for hours without meeting anyone, along the grassy paths among the bracken and the heather, with rabbits scurrying away as you pass. Masses of trees skirt the common, but if you push out towards Ivinghoe (or Ivanhoe), you come suddenly up to great bare rolling downs, with magnificent views in all directions.

The word "common" is from the old system of land tenure when the farms were worked by the whole village (see chapter xxiv.). The people of the district had certain "rights" over the common land—such as *pasture* for their animals; *estovers*, right to cut wood; *piscary*, right to fish in the stream, and so on. But the public in general have no rights, only the people living round. From time to time there has been great soreness of feeling at the way in which people will enclose portions of the common land for their own private grounds. You may notice here and there a piece of grass surrounded by little posts and chains outside a large country house. This is often a mere preliminary to enclosing it by a fence or hedge later on. Laws have been passed to forbid such enclosures, or little would be left of even our village greens.

Touching the question of counties, if the reader is a colonial, with a family belonging to some special district, he will do well to buy one of the various series on Counties and Towns that can be obtained

through any bookseller. The following are some among a large number:

*Cambridge County Geographies.* 1s. each (Cambridge University Press). Plenty of miscellaneous facts, useful for reference.

*Highways and Byways* (Macmillan). Readable and discursive, with very attractive illustrations.

*The Story of the English Towns* (S.P.C.K.).

*Things seen on the English Lakes, and Others* (Seeley, Service). Very full detail, and good photographs.

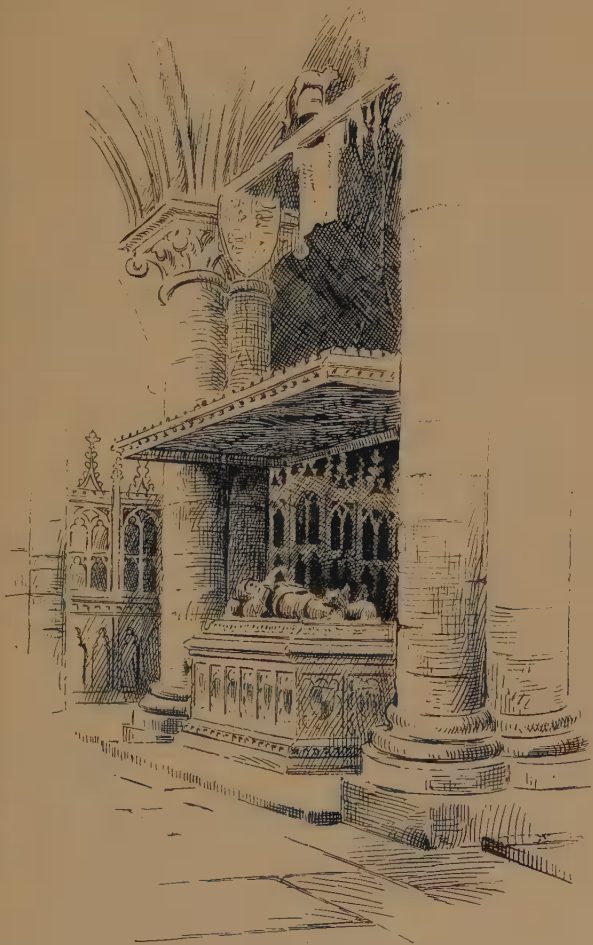
*Memorials of the Counties of England.*

*Unknown Surrey, Sussex, etc.* (John Lane). Chatty in style, with beautiful coloured illustrations.

*Mediaeval Town Series* (Dent). Historical and detailed guides. Fully illustrated.

If his county is too humble and remote to have been included in any of these series, let him go to Mudie's (just where New Oxford Street melts into Holborn), take a firm central position, and demand indignantly "a reliable book on Blankshire." One will soon be forthcoming. But if Mudie's fail, let him step round to the back, go into the British Museum with the air of possessing it (which he does, by the way), and if ever a book on his county has been written, he shall have it.

If beautiful scenery is a special quest, the Lake District must be seen. The L.M.S. Railway issue a booklet about it, and will give you full particulars and advice about the best route and arrangement of time, if you ask at the Inquiry Office at Euston, or any of the branch offices. A walking tour is of course the best, as the more slowly you go the more you see. Now the walk from Wastdale to Buttermere over Black Sail



Comb of the  
Black Prince.

and Scarf Gap, is one of the finest in England. Ruskin says, "The scene from Friar's Crag is one of the three or four most beautiful views in Europe." "Views" vary so much with time of year, time of day, weather, and one's own mood, that it would be worth while making a collection of views that strike you in any way, with notes of special conditions. Early in the morning, in misty weather, the River Tyne, with its shipping at Newcastle, makes a most impressive sight. In England there are thousands of striking views, and the few you note for yourself seem more delightful than any boasted by Ruskin or any other weighty person. Try Malvern as a start.

For those who are making a very short stay in England, a few typical views may be mentioned that are easily accessible from London. Stand on the terrace outside the entrance-door to the National Gallery, and look down Whitehall. This has been called "the finest site in Europe." Towards sunset is a good time of the day to choose, when Nelson's monument is silhouetted against the sky. At about four o'clock on a summer morning stand on Westminster Bridge and say over Wordsworth's sonnet, beginning, "Earth has not anything to show more fair. . . ."

On the bridge in St. James's Park you have Buckingham Palace with one turn of the head and with the other a fine view of our Government offices. Here on a still morning, they say, you can actually hear the brains ticking. For seeing St. James's Park in perfection a June day should be chosen, when the iris and hydrangea are in full flower, and reflected in the water; and when the trees in full leaf cast deep shadows on the grass. We need no fierce notices, "Keep off the grass," nor fences. Londoners would not dream of

treading on these age-long-tended lawns, but enjoy them as an exquisite setting for the buildings around. One portion is set aside for children to play upon. After all, children are not to be put off with merely looking, they must feel, they must roll.

“Ancient Rome, in all its glory, never possessed such a composition as that of the masses of the Embankment walls curving under Waterloo Bridge, crowned by the majestic lines of the stories of Somerset House, with the Dome of St. Paul’s as its distant peak of vision” (PROFESSOR BERESFORD PITE).

If you are feeling vigorous and adventurous, and do not mind being thought eccentric, cross the Tower Bridge by the elevated footway, and make a sketch of what you see from it.

On a bright winter morning you will get a fine view from the White Stone Pond at Hampstead, all London at your feet. A little farther out, Brockley Hill, between Elstree and Edgware, is to be recommended. For Buckinghamshire, Prince’s Risborough can hardly be bettered. In Surrey, Dorking, with Box Hill; and Wadhurst, in Sussex, may be mentioned out of a hundred lovely spots in these two counties, where you cannot escape beauty. Lewes is specially rich in views, as it is high up on the Downs. From Ditchling Beacon you can see the whole of Sussex and the sea beyond; and from Mount Harry the whole valley of the Weald can be seen.

**Rivers.** Water, to an Englishman’s fancy, in some form or other, is necessary for a perfect bit of scenery. It may be a still mountain lake, rather lonely and terrifying (such as Llyn Cae on the slopes of Cader Idris), or a sedgy pool in a park, reflecting trees, sky and fleecy clouds, as in the grounds of Hatfield House;

or a limpid trout stream, leaping or sliding down a tree-sheltered valley such as the Corris, in North Wales; or a great quiet lazy river, full of historical associations, and spanned by an endless variety of bridges, such as the Thames or the Severn.

E. V. Lucas, in *Highways and Byways in Sussex*, says of the River Rother, "One can walk by its side for miles and no sound save the music of repose—the soft munching of the cows, the chuckle of the water as a rat slips in, the sudden yet soothing splash caused by a jumping fish." But sometimes, as on Dartmoor, you hear a stream making its own delicious sounds over rock and pebble, when you cannot actually see the water, "the noise of a hidden brook in the leafy month of June."

Here are some supremely excellent river scenes:

The Wharfe, above Bolton Abbey in Yorkshire. (Best reached from the delightful town of Skipton-in-Craven.) Trees and winding stream.

The Mawddach between Barmouth and Dolgelly—Mountains, trees and every other imaginable delight.

The Thames from Richmond Hill, and the Pool of London, by way of contrast, will be missed by no one who would see England. Each of these views speaks for itself so powerfully, that no suggestions are needed.

The Severn is one of our finest rivers, and a good point to take is Minchinhampton in Gloucestershire, whence you can see the river with a background of Welsh hills.

At Lynton in Devon there is a delightful spot called Watersmeet, where the East Lyn and the West Lyn join.

Earth has few joys which can compare with an afternoon on the river at Oxford or Cambridge. To sit back in the sunshine and be punted by an undergraduate who can turn dangerous corners and get under dubious bridges, to be brushed by the overhanging trees, to watch studious men trying to work out-of-doors and many more succeeding in amusing themselves, to step ashore for tea or an ice . . . to cast lazy glances on some of the finest buildings to be had . . . and so on.





## CHAPTER V

### TREES

IF we were required to name England's chief natural beauty, it would certainly be her trees. And it is difficult to decide when her wooded hills and lanes are at their best. In winter you can see their lace-like branches against the sky, sometimes laden with snow. In April their daintiness is exquisite, when there is only a sprinkling of tender green. During the last week in May they are in full leaf, and are better than in June, because no dust has marred them. In late October and November they are at their most magnificent in gold and red.

All through the year the trunks of the trees show lovely colours; sometimes in the sunshine they are a bright green, almost emerald; and an old Scotch fir, one of the commonest of our trees, gives a vivid pink.

It seems to be a peculiarity of trees that they grow more beautiful as they age. Keats, in his enumeration of the "things of beauty" that are "joys for ever" places old trees after the sun and moon.



Whether you are "good at drawing" or not, you will understand more about a tree by trying to draw it than in any other way, and winter is the best time for getting at the anatomy of it. Ruskin says in his *Elements of Drawing* that it is by seizing the leading lines that we get a kind of vital truth in every natural form, expressive of its past history and present action. In a tree these leading lines show what kind of fortune it has had to endure; how troublesome trees have pushed it aside and tried to strangle it or starve it; where and when kind trees have sheltered it, and grown up lovingly with it; what winds torment it most, and so on. Try always, whenever you look at a form, to see the lines in it which have had power over its past fate and will have power over its futurity. These are its *fateful* lines, and its chief beauty lies in these.

A serious student of trees ought to take a journey from Waterloo to the New Forest—a paradise of trees. Here you will find the very spirit of English woodland scenery. Even as the train passes through it, you forget the railway and seem to be in the heart of the forest, with the sun glinting among the trees—oak and ash and silver birch and elm in bewitching variety. Of course a motor-drive enables you to linger at will, but for beauty it does not surpass the train run. Tyrrell's Ford will attract children, for it was here that Sir Walter Tyrrell stopped to have his horse's hoofs reversed by the blacksmith, to cover his traces after killing King Rufus. And there is the Rufus Stone to mark the spot where the king's body was found.

Sherwood is an ancient royal forest stretching from Nottingham as far north as Whitby, although very indefinitely marked to-day. It is famous chiefly on

account of Robin Hood, whose name remains in Robin Hood's Bay, on the Yorkshire coast. This well-known outlaw was a prince of robbers, taking from rich lords and prelates, and giving to the poor, shooting the king's deer in his own forests, the hero of many a popular ballad. He was *the* gallant outlaw, just as Dick Turpin of later days was *the* gallant highwayman. The name of the ancient forest is preserved in the regiment, "The Sherwood Foresters."

Richmond Park has magnificent trees with broad stretches of undulating turf, and instead of the ponies of the New Forest, we have the shy deer browsing, with all the associations of ancient wealth and calm that they impart.

Epping Forest is an easy bus-ride from London. Good roads cross it, but each side the dark forest closes up, its old trees with their fantastic roots looking sinister enough in the dusk, but inviting for climbs or picnic parties in the sunshine, with the cool green glades between. One can only too well imagine the fate of the Babes in the Wood in such a gloomy spot. I was born in a little cottage right in the forest, and can well remember being once lost in it and lying down, quite hopeless, to die.

Hadley Woods can be reached by bus or train, and a lovely round walk can be made from New Barnet station to High Barnet, with green glades to wander in, and a host of blackberries in September.

Beyond all other trees, the OAK is dear to Englishmen, symbolic as it is of strength, and intimately connected with our naval victories under Nelson. For building and furniture it is unsurpassed, not only for strength, but for beauty of grain and colour. Famous oaks gather legends around them and give their names

to villages, such as Goff's Oak, near Cheshunt (Herts). This old tree is said to have been planted in 1060. It is referred to in Walton's *Compleat Angler*.

One that is ivy-covered and decayed is to be found in Greenwich Park, surrounded by an iron paling. The tradition is that Queen Elizabeth used to have meals in its hollow trunk. As she was born in Greenwich and spent many years there, it is easy to picture the high-spirited princess indulging in such a picnic.

Certain oaks in various parts are called "Gospel Oaks," where the Gospel was preached at least a thousand years ago. Since they must have been a fair size for this purpose, it is computed that some may be at least twelve hundred years old. The name remains when the tree has gone, as at "Gospel Oak," near Hampstead Heath in North London. An oak was purposely chosen, no doubt, as a place for a Christian service, to counteract the heathen associations, since these trees had been an object of pagan worship under the Druids, as the name implies. But to this day the little mistletoe plant, a parasite of the oak, is never used in church decorations, although much sought after for the home; the association with pagan worship was probably too strong, and the taboo remained.

Near London Bridge portions of a Roman riverside wharf have been discovered, judged to be of a date earlier than A.D. 100 by the numerous specimens of first-century pottery that the reckless Romans threw into the river. This wharf is formed of huge oak trees roughly squared.

There is a famous oak in Holwood Park, near Keston (Kent), under which Wilberforce and Pitt met to discuss the abolition of slavery. In Enfield Chase (which is the site of an old royal hunting forest)

there is a particularly fine oak, left in the pathway of Culloden Road. There is competition between Leamington and Warwick as to which has the central oak of England.

As an instance of the oak as a "defender of England," it is amusing to recall that Collingwood used to walk about his estate, stealthily dropping acorns here and there, "for later service in His Majesty's Navy."

The YEW tree can claim a position of defender of England almost as high as the oak. Before the introduction of fire-arms and for a long time after, our chief weapon was the bow. Numerous laws were passed to encourage practice in archery (e.g. holidays were to be spent in shooting games; each man had to possess a bow of his own height). Now the best wood for strength and pliability was yew. To prevent the waste of this slow-growing tree, no one but a man of certain fixed income was allowed to have a bow of yew. Why do we find yews in churchyards so often? Partly, no doubt, that they might be protected from theft, and that one at least should be in every community, ready for time of war. And partly on account of another curious property of the yew—its leaves are poisonous to cattle. It is therefore a dangerous tree for ordinary fields and hedges, but would be out of the way of cattle in a churchyard. A statute of Edward I. states that trees were planted in churchyards to protect the church from high winds.

Within easy distance of London is a very characteristic yew tree, of great age, that has spread all round the church, at East Barnet (about twenty minutes' walk from New Barnet station on the L.N.E.R.).

Some yews have reached a girth of nearly thirty



THE "IMMEMORIAL" ELM

feet. One at Aukerwyke, near Staines, might well have been there when Magna Carta was signed. In Buckland churchyard, near Dover, is one whose trunk has split and extended horizontally.

Very graceful along our lanes and avenues of country houses are the "immemorial" ELMS. Rooks often nest in the top branches, and their sound adds to the attractiveness of the trees. But elms are treacherous; their height is disproportionate to their roots, and consequently in a gale they may fall without any warning, wrecking any house within reach. The wood is useful particularly for its resistance to water. Old London Bridge was built on elm piles, and when they were pulled up, after six hundred years, they showed hardly any decay.

An historical elm is to be found in Hadley Wood (High Barnet). "Latimer's Elm" is surrounded by a paling, near the Hadley entrance gate, and is traditionally the tree under which the martyr used to preach.

BEECH trees are specially fine in Buckinghamshire. "Burnham Beeches" is a favourite resort. The care of Burnham Beeches is, for some occult reason, in the hands of the Coal and Corn and Finance Committee of the Corporation of London. This august body pays an annual visit in October, and plants young trees. Much discussion has arisen over the trees' having been pollarded. One theory is that the noble owner was executed (this sounds like the Tudor period) and that his widow had all the trees beheaded to sympathise with him. One old tree, called "Maiden Beech," is said to be the only one that escaped. The exquisite green of the beech trees in spring is only rivalled by the glory of their autumn colouring, and the delicious grey of their smooth and graceful trunks.

This forest was a favourite resort of the poet Gray. At Ashridge Park is the famous "Queen Beech," over one hundred and thirty feet high, branchless for eighty feet, very straight and elegant.

PINES are to be found in delightful woods in Surrey; and a very fine avenue of pines is Wellingtonia Avenue, near Reading. Ruskin says of the pine, "It stands compact, like one of its own cones, slightly curved on its side, finished and quaint as a carved tree in some Elizabethan garden; and instead of being wild in expression, forms the softest of all forest scenery, for other trees show their trunks and twisting boughs; but the pine, growing either in luxuriant mass or in happy isolation, allows no branch to be seen."

CHESTNUTS make such a fine show at Bushey, near Hampton Court, with their early and generous blossoms, that we have called the Sunday when they are at their best "Chestnut Sunday." The famous triple avenue of limes and chestnuts, a mile long, was planted by William III.

Hampton Court will be visited for many reasons, chiefly historical, but the lover of trees must look for the avenues to be seen from the central window of the great drawing-room. William III. had much of the grounds laid out in the Dutch manner. It was in the same grounds that he was thrown from his horse, fatally, by the "little gentleman in black," as the mole was called by the Jacobites.

The CEDAR of Lebanon, both from its name and associations, and also for its majestic grace, has always been a favourite in English parks.

Very fine specimens are to be found in many parts of England. Anything more stately and ornamental it would be difficult to devise, especially when it is

set in the midst of a smooth lawn, or when the trees have been planted in an avenue. St. Stephen's Vicarage at St. Albans claims to possess the largest cedar in England, but there are very many rivals. Goodwood, near Chichester in Sussex, the seat of the Duke of Richmond, has an avenue that is unsurpassed. A magnificent specimen near the Water-Beach entrance has a circumference of over twenty-five feet, measured at five feet from the ground. There is one of very graceful shape in Kensington Gardens. The cedar at Lambridge in Bath is said to have been planted by a Crusader who brought the young tree himself from Lebanon.

The SYCAMORE with its broad leaves gives a very fine shade, and is a favourite English tree. Ruskin specially admired a sycamore at Crouch End in North London (Haselmere Road). The man who built a house near it arranged his building so as to give due effect to the beauty of the tree.

A still more romantic sycamore can be seen at Tewin near Hertford. For a good walker, or for anyone with a car, a search for Tewin makes a capital summer day's outing. Break away from Potter's Bar and make for Newgate Street, Epping Green, Little Berkhamsted—you pass through the far-famed Hertfordshire lanes, unsurpassed in their special line of beauty. Quite away from the village of Tewin is its little old church, high up and commanding lovely views. In the spacious churchyard you will find a large sycamore and the stumps of six other trees of a different kind, including two elms and an ash, growing out of a grave. A heavy and ornate tombstone, with iron railings, has been lifted by the trees, which have grown in and around the stone and iron in a most



uncanny way. You cannot look at it without feeling a little distressed and puzzled. It affords an interesting example of how folklore starts round any unusual freak of nature. Lady Grimston, who was buried here in 1731, is now said to have been one who denied the existence of God, and as she died she is reported to have said, "If there be a God in Heaven, out of my grave will trees grow seven," or words to that effect. This, of course, was a challenge to the Almighty, and in consequence the trees duly appeared, and the folk were impressed. The good lady was probably not a whit more atheistic than her fellow-countrymen of the eighteenth century, but folk-lore always finds a cause. (Tewin is more quickly reached from Hertford or Welwyn if time is short.)

A weeping WILLOW is a very graceful addition to a river or lake. There is one of sentimental interest at Broxbourne; it was grown from a slip taken from a tree near Napoleon's grave in St. Helena.

The "Backs" at Cambridge have a fine show of trees in avenues and "wildernesses" and other ornamental arrangements, most richly beautiful perhaps in the autumn colouring. Some very graceful weeping willows are specially to be noted by Trinity and St. John's Colleges, with reflections in the river.

At least two MULBERRY trees of great age still bear fruit. One is Milton's, in the garden of Christ's College, Cambridge. Another is Bishop Bonner's, in the grounds of the City of London Hospital, Victoria Park, E. Judging by the nursery rhyme, mulberry trees were common enough in early days. That illustrious mulberry in New Place, Stratford, said to have been planted by Shakespeare, was cut down for firewood in 1768,

by the Rev. Mr. Gastrell, called in consequence by Rossetti "the supreme unhung."

A day in Kew Gardens, especially in the less formal arboretum, gives a fine chance for studying trees scientifically, or for enjoying the beauty of a great variety. A walk along the river from Kew to Richmond in the horse-chestnut season is a paradise for boys and girls who gather the nuts for "conkers."

For the new roads that are being constructed to meet the increased motor traffic, it is urged that trees of the best kind should be planted along their sides, such as oak, elm, beech, maple, red and white chestnut. Some fine avenues in the future will result. Apple-trees make a lovely show in April and would refresh wayfarers in the autumn. The fear is that small boys would pluck the fruit before it was ripe. The only suggestion that has been offered to meet this difficulty, is to make apple-eating compulsory in the schools, and to give lessons in tree-climbing.



## THE TREE

Burgeoning splendid of an ancient world,  
That all its silent toil makes manifest  
In beauty, careless of encroaching years.  
Even as urgent buds in wind-swept March  
Pierce, to our wonder, through the knotty bark  
Of some long-rigid bole, so cleavest thou  
The rugged surface of terrestrial crust,  
To forge a way triumphant toward the sun,  
In strength rejoicing. Mighty is thy reach,  
Grasping the earth, as, mid thy leafy bow'r,  
The bird full-throated anchors fast to thee,  
Swept by a rising tide of raptur'd song,  
Adoring, jubilant. Thy murmuring boughs,  
In rhythmic sway detain the travelling wind,  
To raise sonorous anthem on the storms  
That try thy steadfast virtue. 'Neath the sod  
Thy roots in darkness stir the sleeping earth.  
Searching they penetrate the cumbered dust  
Of long-dead histories, renewing all  
In vernal beauty.

Such the Spirit's pow'r  
In him, whose birth restores, as doth the tree,  
Forgotten dreams to new-born ecstasy  
Of fresh endeavour. Who from earth and Heaven,  
Drawing his measure full of such sweet leaven  
As may sustain him joyously, survives  
The unrecorded hopes of vanish'd lives.

C. M. DREW



SECTION II  
UP IN TOWN





THE TOWER

## CHAPTER VI

### LONDON PRIDE

WHETHER a complete stranger, or an old citizen returning from exile, you cannot come into London without some emotion. There is no denying that it is the centre of the world's business and pleasure and interest. The stranger is almost invariably disappointed, for the size of London cannot be taken in without a fairly prolonged stay; the perception of its beauty requires a peculiar education, and as for its historical and other interests, these make a point of concealing themselves.

You must love her ere to you  
She shall seem worthy of your love.

The returned exiles like to bowl into the station terminus on an October evening, and drive along the streets just as the lamps are being lit, for then they get that blue light. A shower of rain enhances all, for it is not only homely, but it gives delightful reflections

on the streets and pavements. Eagerly each well-known landmark is noted, with a sigh of gratitude that it is still there. . . .

Londoners freely abuse their city; they do not know its history or its treasures; but they take pride in a few points about it. First and foremost they keep the streets quiet. London at its thickest and busiest is never noisy. If a voice is raised so as to be audible to any but the person addressed, "someone from the country" is guessed at once. Again, through the frequent throngs you can get along quite easily, for no one hinders the rest. A man who stops suddenly, or takes the wrong side, or idles in a busy spot, is put down as "from the country." The ease with which a road can be crossed (any road, at any time) delights a Londoner. Someone "from the country" is at once detected by his anxious looks in *two* directions (one is always sufficient) and by his hurried steps. Sometimes a Londoner's dread of being seen to hurry over a crossing leads to a dangerous shave, and you may see the nonchalant stroll turn to a nimble skip; but even then it is nimble and rightly directed, and there is never any fluster. There may, however, be some winged words from the driver of the car.

To see Londoners at their best, the town should be in the grip of a fog, or a strike. Then trains or buses are late or few, masses of belated people have to be herded and directed by policemen. On these occasions our grim earnestness is cast off, and we do just as we are told, smile on one another, and have even been known to speak to strangers.

There are two things that London keeps mysteriously dark—the exact position of its theatres (never mentioned



in advertisements) and the whereabouts of its post-offices. These latter often lurk in the back regions of a grocer's shop. Even a policeman cannot always tell you where one may be found. But the tube or a bus will take you to Newgate Street and the General Post Office, should you require a stamp.

Among the fauna of London a few stand out as inspiring special affection. The sea-gulls at Blackfriars are always sure of plenty of breadcrumbs, and flock there in great numbers during the cold weather, giving a distinctive feature to the Embankment, with their white wings and peculiar scream.

On the steps of the British Museum, in St. Paul's Churchyard, in Victoria Station, and other busy places, strut about innumerable pigeons. "They watch their fellow-citizens at work with a calm benevolence that is born of a magnificent digestion."

In some few spots, such as Gray's Inn Gardens, rooks can be heard cawing. Much anxiety was felt by the barristers some years ago by the rooks' departure, owing to some repairs being made in a roof. But when all was quiet again, they returned.

All these birds are as sacred as Roman tribunes. On the other hand, openly despised, but secretly cherished, are the sparrows, like little street-arabs, gaining a living from the most perilous places, between the wheels of the buses and the claws of the cats, and all the time seemingly true Londoners in their determination not to get out of the way of the traffic till the last fraction of a second.

The presence of sheep in our parks must strike a stranger as curious. They are not there for ornament or for archaic effect. They are there for the simple purpose of feeding. Like the woolsack in the House

of Lords, they remind us of the time when wool was our great national commodity.

In St. James's Park you will find pheasants loping about as naturally as on a Yorkshire moor, and pelicans and ducks, leading the life of the idle rich.

Children, probably, will insist on going to the Zoo. Certainly the animals and birds are given the utmost liberty possible, and housed magnificently. But they are housed. That is the point; and the whole place is but an exaggerated case of a caged skylark. That eternal pacing to and fro of the big beasts and the melancholy, far-away look in their eyes surely ought not to be. Now that big-game observers are sending home photographs of the creatures, pursuing their lawful occasions in the jungle; and now that the cinema can give their very movements, perhaps the Zoo will decline as a source of entertainment. Country people come to see it, but educated Londoners are not proud of it.

Concerning the trees of London, one outstanding marvel tops all others; there are so many. If all the buildings were caught away, London would look like a large forest that had been cleared here and there. A good sport is to try to find a spot in London from which no tree is visible.

The plane-tree, with its capacity for shedding flakes of its outer bark and showing up fresh and clean, is looked upon as the city's own darling. It flourishes in any of our beautifully kept squares; some notably fine specimens are in Bedford and Berkeley Squares. There is an avenue of them near St. Botolph's, Bishopsgate, where working people sit on benches to snatch a few minutes' rest in the lunch hour. St. Dunstan's-in-the-East is another of the homely churches hospitable to

workers, and in its garden is the very plane-tree mentioned by Walter Raleigh, at least according to tradition.

The gardens of the Inns of Court have many fine plane-trees; and a little oasis of beauty, with plane-trees, flowers, flagged pavement, and fountain playing, is to be found in one of the busiest spots of London. Find the old timbered houses in Holborn, just where Gray's Inn Road joins it, and take the little turning either right or left of the houses, and you are in Staple Inn, to feel yourself suddenly taken back a century or two.

Here in Staple Inn, too, is that rare thing in London, a clock, and although it seems to have been at work for some two hundred years, it is going strong and accurately. So if you should want to know the time, make it an excuse to go round to Staple Inn. Big Ben is also reliable, and Londoners often carry watches, but with no great confidence in them.

There are a few sacred spots in London. In one of the passages leading from Newgate Street to St. Paul's Churchyard (Panyer Alley) is a stone marking the highest point in the city. It represents a boy sitting on a pannier, or basket, and underneath are the words, "When you have sought the City round, yet still this is the highest ground." The date is 1688.

Into the wall of St. Swithun's Church, in Cannon Street, is built the fragment called London Stone (mentioned in Shakespeare: 2 *Henry VI.*, IV. vi.). It was long supposed to be a Roman milliarium, marking the point in London where all the great Roman roads met. (For a full inquiry into its history, see *Unknown London*, chapter ix.)

You must go out a little distance to see Dick Whittington's Stone. Up Highgate Hill you will get a good view of London, and can imagine the little

runaway boy with his cat, and the bells of Bow Church seeming to say:

Turn again, Dick Whittington—  
Three times Lord Mayor of London.

Do not press the details of the legend too closely; it is too good not to be true. Anyhow, Whittington was three times Lord Mayor, and gave large sums of money to Henry V.—a true English hero; and there is the stone to prove the story true. Or else, how did it come there?

*“The Old Lady of Threadneedle Street.”* The Bank of England—there is an air of romance about this building, and many a thrilling story has been written round imaginary attacks on it and attempted robberies of its millions. There is the old joke of the lady getting into a bus with the words, “Conductor, I want the Bank of England,” followed by the ready remark, “She don’t want much, do she, Bill?” It is easily the world’s ugliest building, and is interesting from this point of view, with its pathetic attempt at urns for ornament.

It is to be hoped that your business or pleasure will involve some little affair inside the Bank. Nothing can be more dignified and solemn than the atmosphere in this cathedral to Mammon, with its rows of absorbed clerks (or priests), and the quiet footfall of the worshippers in the aisles. But outside is fun enough. Suppose you arrive by the Tube, you will find the Bank Station a complicated but easily navigated centre of several lines, and part of it is actually built under a church; so don’t hurry away without a thought of this oddity. Above, in the street, you will find a great junction of roads, and the Mansion House and Royal Exchange looking down on the busiest spot in the world.

Every bus and car in creation seem to be here; but owing to the skill of the good-humoured City police the road is as easy to cross as a country lane (in fact, far less risky than many country crossings).

Londoners take a queer kind of inverted pride in never going to see their own "sights." Few indeed can be met who have ever visited the Tower, although country cousins are duly dispatched thither. It may amuse you to question any Londoner you meet: "Have you been up in the galleries, or down in the crypt, of St. Paul's?" "Have you visited Henry VII.'s chapel at Westminster?" "Have you been over the Houses of Parliament?"—and so on. Then note the answers, and discover the percentage of affirmatives you receive. The reasons for this neglect seem to be, first, the idea that "any day will do," so that there is a perpetual postponement; and secondly, the dread that a Londoner has of being suspected as a countryman "seeing London."

A genuine cause for pride, but one of which few Londoners seem aware, is that the king himself is only allowed to enter the City on sufferance, as it were. There is a little ceremony at Temple Bar before the king comes in that would astonish any other capital in the world. Also soldiers with fixed bayonets may not enter without permission.

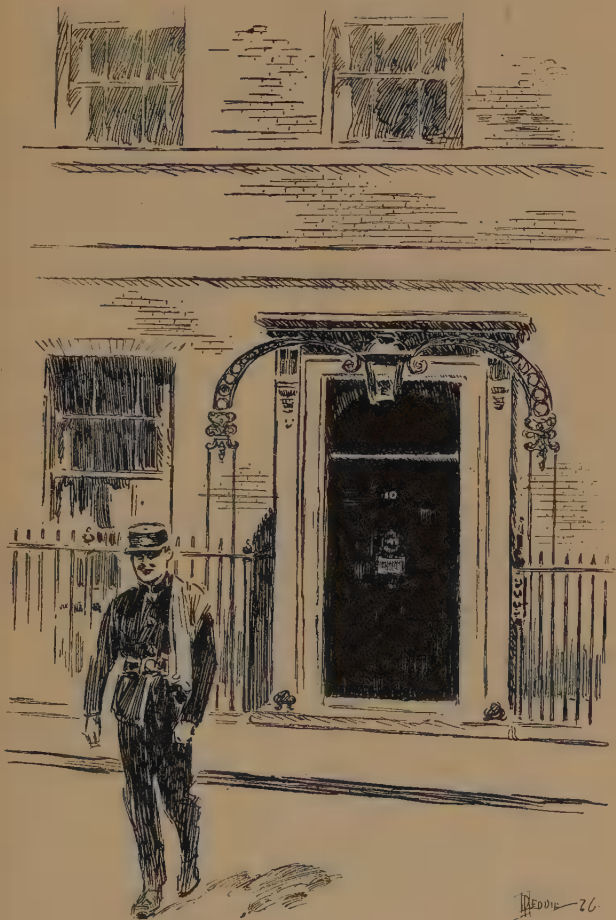
Temple Bar itself had to be taken down, as it impeded the traffic, and a griffin of uncertain species has taken its place, to frighten people who contemplate litigation. However, if you wish to see the fine old Bar, it is not very far from London. It now forms the entrance to Theobald's Park (near Cheshunt), belonging to Sir Hedworth Meux. In this secluded spot it probably misses the cheerful hum of town, not to

mention glimpses of the king being "let in." One would almost rather it had been destroyed.

Every visitor to London will want to see the great heart of things—the centre of Empire where the destiny of nations is settled—the official residence of the Prime Minister. Surely here, you will say, London must show her paces. She does. When you have found Downing Street, you will turn to your friendly policeman, or other native, and say, "You mistake me, I was not inquiring for lodgings."

But No. 10 Downing Street is a deeply romantic link with the past. On one side, the front in Downing Street, it looks severe, for its Puritan builder in 1683 was Sir George Downing, ambassador under Cromwell to The Hague. On the other side, by the Horse Guards' Parade, it smiles with memories of the vanished Palace of Whitehall and the Stuarts. It was given to Sir Robert Walpole by George II., but he would only accept it for his office of First Lord of the Treasury, to which post he arranged that it should be annexed for ever. So Sir Robert was not only our first "Prime Minister," but he also made this fine gesture with his house. No one can look with a cold eye on a house where such momentous decisions have been made. Pitt's Cabinet sat here all through the Napoleonic Wars. "Wellington and Nelson met for the only time in their lives in the entrance hall, both waiting to see the Minister, and neither knowing who the other was. They chatted, but not till later did they learn with whom they had each been talking" (from *Old London Town*, by Will Owen).

Our cousins from over-seas will be gratified to learn that "somewhere" in Downing Street is the Colonial Office, with an entrance invisible to the



10 DOWNING STREET

naked eye. Contrast this with the Houses of Parliament, and the new building over the river, and reflect that the less important one's work is in England, the more imposing is one's housing. Empire managed in a back street—silk stockings sold in a palace.

In connection with Sir Robert Walpole having given the nation No. 10 Downing Street, it should be remembered that he also presented us with our Saturday half-holiday. During the long time that he was Prime Minister, he used to have Parliament close on Saturday at noon, in order that he might get down to his estate in Norfolk, to see to his turnips and to enjoy a hunt with his hounds. The habit thus started has persisted in Parliament ever since and has spread to the whole nation.

Just by Downing Street, full in the middle of Whitehall, is a truly sacred spot to everybody—the Cenotaph. Men raise their hats as they pass it, and women wish they had devised some similar simple way of showing their feeling about it. You will see people of all types lingering to look at it, or laying a flower on it. You cannot get near it on the 11th of November.

Charities in London are innumerable, and they have their ups and downs in popular favour. Flag-days have been overdone, and have entered the area of national jest. But if the Lord Mayor starts a fund for anything, money pours in like water. He only does it occasionally, and for some big disaster, such as a famine anywhere in our dominions, or a colliery accident.

Every year everyone, rich or poor, gives what he can on "Hospital Sunday." We really are proud of our hospitals, and love them. Churches vie with one another as to which shall get the biggest collection. Sometimes the medical students, dressed in fantastic



costumes, beg in the streets for their hospitals, seeking alms from bus-tops, and holding up rich-looking cars, in good old Robin Hood style. Perhaps it is because the hospitals do not belong to the State that we love them so much. Our national hatred of the State is deep and bitter and eternal, in spite of logic and rhetoric and the extension of the franchise.

### BOOKS

- Birds in London*, by W. H. Hudson (Dent).
- Unnoticed London*, by E. Montezambert (Dent).
- Old London Town*, by Will Owen (Arrowsmith).  
Five-minute talks on out-of-the-way things in London, with original drawings of each.
- The Spell of London*, by H. V. Morton (Methuen).  
Romantic and full of sentiment.
- London Nights*, by Stephen Graham (Hurst and Blackett). Description of less well-known aspects.
- Urbanities*, by E. V. Lucas (Methuen), and several books, novels and essays, by the same author.
- The London Perambulator*, by J. and M. Bone (Cape).  
A real eye-opener to many beauties in London, especially the Portland Stone.
- The Nature World of London*, by W. Johnson (Sheldon Press).
- London. Mediaeval Town Series*, by H. B. Wheatley (Dent).
- London*, by G. H. Cunningham (Dent).

### For Children

- A Child's London* (Sands and Co.). Poems and illustrations.
- The Children's Book of London*, by G. E. Mitton (A. and C. Black). Historical, with good illustrations.



WHITEHALL

## CHAPTER VII

### SOME FAMILIAR FIGURES

IF we had to point to one man who embodies the spirit of England most completely it would be the Policeman. He is no doubt a terror to the guilty, but to the ninety and nine just persons he is a real friend—a very present help in trouble. No matter how remote the house you want to find, he knows it, and directs you there in the fewest possible words. The ordinary person you meet is apt to tell you the way so fully and so many times, that you become completely muddled. So ask a policeman. Some years ago there was a popular song, bidding you “ask a policeman” for whatever you wanted. How does he acquire his vast stores of wisdom? We know that before he is admitted to the force he has to be of a certain weight and height and chest measurement, and to be perfect in physique. We know, too, that he is taught to be invariably courteous to everyone, and to work *with* a crowd rather than

against it. But the scheme of his training is secret. An occasional guess can be made at some of it, however; recently a lady thanked a policeman for his help during a strike, and received the reply, "Oh, that's all right, mum, it's one of our rules to take care of old women." It is a pleasing thing to watch a policeman looking after children in any sort of need, such as crossing a busy street. Genuine distress of any kind gains his sympathy. He will even lend money—and further than this one cannot go.

"Two American girls recently in London spent much of their time in pretending to an ignorance of the City, entirely (they confessed) in order to experience the delight of conversing with constables; and a lady once told me that the nicest men she had ever met were the policemen in the Lost Umbrella Office on the Embankment" (from *Urbanities*, by E. V. Lucas).

The City Police, with red armlets, are the cream of the force, and every visitor to England must find some excuse to hold converse with one, and as for Scotland Yard, it is as much worth an umbrella as Paris was worth a mass.

But "Bobby," or "Sir Robert," as he is often affectionately called (after Sir Robert Peel), is to be seen at his best when guiding the traffic at some congested point, such as the Mansion House or Hyde Park Corner. He uses the minimum of action, and everybody obeys his slightest sign. If you are held up in a taxi, do not grumble at the delay; the time will be well spent in watching the policeman. He holds one hand up to keep back the train of traffic in one direction, and uses the other hand to beckon on the others. The change over is made with astonishing



"OUR PRICELESS BRITISH BOBBY"

swiftness and precision, for all the drivers' eyes are on the white-gloved hands, and not a second is lost. On no account must you ever speak to a policeman on point duty, any more than you would speak to the man at the wheel, nor to one who has not his armlet on. Without the blue and white band he is "off duty," and is hurrying home with a pipe in his mouth and should not be delayed.

The following conversation from an old number of *Punch* is a good illustration of the confidence and courtesy that exist between us and our police:

"*Reveller*. Constable, please tell me where Mr. Brown lives.

"*Policeman*. Why, bless me, sir, surely you *are* Mr. Brown?

"*Reveller*. Exactly. Where do I live?"

The French people have paid us this compliment, "Your police do nothing, yet everything is done by them."

Good fortune may send you some little disturbance in the street: do not hurry past, or you will miss a real bit of London life. So neatly woven is the traffic, both foot and vehicular, that the least hitch (produced perhaps by a fainting woman, or a slight collision of a cart with a bus) at once collects a small crowd; errand boys and children seem to ooze out of the ground, while advice and abuse are freely poured forth. Inevitably a policeman strides to the scene, with the formula, "'Ere, what's all this?" and out come a notebook and a pencil and an air of setting everything right. Get away in good time before your name and address are taken as a witness, unless of course you desire experience of a police court (not to be despised if you have time to spare).

Let Rumours percolate the Lobby;  
 Let feeble hearts wax faint and throbby;  
 Rocklike, when all around is slobby,  
 He stands, our priceless British Bobby.

*Punch*, 26 May, 1926.

However, there was an older police force than that created by Peel. London has one great road where traffic never ceases, and which, crowded with untold wealth, needs incessant watching. This is the Thames. The East India Company found it necessary to have a police force to guard against theft as far back as 1797. The Thames Police Force (since 1839 amalgamated with the London Police) nose about the river day and night in small patrol-boats, with crews of three men. Nothing escapes their vigilance. One of their duties is the rescuing and recovering of suicides. A special room, with bath, blankets and restoratives, is always ready, near Waterloo Bridge—apparently the favourite one chosen by these weary and desperate fighters with fate.

The Yeomen of the Guard, or Beefeaters, wear to-day the dress devised for them by Henry VIII., in order, it is said, that his own corpulence should not look peculiar. But this may be as mythical as the derivation of their name from "buffetier."

A "bluejacket," or naval seaman, wears the wide washable collar that once protected his coat from the pigtail. Round the edge run three lines of white braid, to commemorate the three great victories of Nelson (Nile, Copenhagen and Trafalgar). His scarf is still black, since the day when the Navy went into mourning for Nelson. A specially delectable sight is a bluejacket carrying a parrot in a cage.

Another instance of remains of mourning for a hero who died at the moment of victory may be seen

in a black thread among the gold lace in the uniform of the Leicestershire Regiment, who fought with Wolfe at Quebec.

The pigtail is also recalled by the "flash" of the Welsh Fusiliers—a bunch of black ribbon at the back of the collar.

Any day in passing the Law Courts you may see a barrister in wig and gown hurrying across the road. If he has a case on, he hurries, and if he has not, he hurries to look as if he had. Closer inspection is needed to see the funny little hanging pocket sewn on to the back of his gown. This was used in old times for the reception of his fee; it was not considered correct for him to accept a fee openly.

In school holiday-time, a "blue-coat" boy may often be seen. He is hatless, in a long, dark-blue gown, with leathern belt, white bands, and yellow stockings. This was the dress in the time of Edward VI., when the school was founded. Christ's Hospital is one of our largest public schools, where Lamb, Coleridge and Leigh Hunt were educated. But it has been moved to Horsham in Sussex, and the General Post Office occupies its old site. The school at Horsham consists of separate houses called after Old Boys, forming a small town of their own, with a special station called "Christ's Hospital" on the Southern Railway.

An observant eye will sooner or later be rewarded by the sight of a bishop, a dean, or an archdeacon. These are the peripatetic clergy, and the gaiters and aprons are remains of the old riding-dress. And the strings on the brims of their hats were originally there to keep the hat on in wind and rapid motion.

The Chelsea Pensioners in their brilliant scarlet coats add a lovely note of colour to our London streets.

The Hospital at Chelsea was founded by Charles II., on the petition, so it is said, of Nell Gwynn; and the pensioners, some six hundred in number, always keep "Oak-apple Day" (29 May), in remembrance of Charles's escape from death, when he hid in the branches of an oak-tree from the eyes of Cromwell's soldiers. The actual date of this hiding in the Boscobel Oak was of course just after the Battle of Worcester, one of Cromwell's "mercies" on 3 September; but 29 May is kept because on that day Charles returned to his kingdom. The following is Lord Grenville's inscription upon the stone adjoining the Boscobel Oak at Dropmore: "This tree, raised from an acorn of the oak which sheltered Charles II. at Boscobel, is planted and cherished here as a Memorial, not of his preservation, but of the re-establishment of the Ancient and Free Monarchy of England, the true source of her Prosperity and Glory."

A bronze statue of Charles II. is in the centre of the south garden, and by common consent the hospital seems to belong to him, although James II. and William III. carried out and finished the building.

Oak-apple Day is certainly the time to choose for a visit. On that day there is a parade and inspection of the old pensioners, *senio belloque fracti*. But perhaps the annual Flower Show, held in their gardens a few days before, is a cheerier sight, when the old men can be glimpsed here and there, and are ready for a chat—not so nervous and self-conscious as on parade under a royal eye.

Women in uniform are not so common, but here and there you will find one of those really gracious-looking figures, the women policemen, dressed very much in the same style as the men. As can be imagined,



they do an enormous amount of good work in the London streets.

A Salvation Army lass carries her red badge and title on her old-fashioned poke bonnet. It seems a pity to condemn a comely girl to such an attire. Changes sometimes happen in England.

Girl Guides, in their dark-blue tunics and wide hats, are seen frequently, especially in little groups in country places, going on some expedition with one of their guiders or captains. The younger members are called Brownies, and are dressed in brown. It is pretty to see them picnicking in a wood among the primroses and wild hyacinths; they look like some little gnomes out of a fairy story. There is always, too, the comforting reflection that they are taught to leave no litter behind them. This leaving of litter is one of England's minor scourges, and no appeals seem able to stop it.

Hospital nurses are to be seen in all sorts of places, and at all hours, hurrying, always hurrying—either to get to a patient or to snatch a brief spell of exercise and fresh air in their “off” hours. Everyone makes way for them, gives up a seat to them, honours them in every sense. Their life, whether in a hospital, or in a private house, means an immense strain and greater responsibility than even a doctor's.

Almost equally respected by all are the nuns who go about in couples, either begging from house to house for the poor, collecting broken meat from the hotels, or doing any menial service that is needed for the sick and destitute. They are always grateful for the slightest gift, and contented even when rebuffed (which is not often).

For sheer alertness and manual dexterity, you would go far before you met anyone to outdo the newspaper

boy. He stands at the street corner, with a placard draped on the lamp-post or serving him as an apron, his eye roving for likely customers, his raucous voice repeating incessantly, "Starnewstandard—All the winners." You select one of these syllables as you pass, and in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, you find the paper in your possession, and the boy's grubby hand that has done the trick already crooked to receive the penny. Meanwhile his chant never ceases, nor does his eye turn from its roving to look at his customer. It is a pity to buy a paper in a decorous shop, when you can have this miracle performed for you outside. If you are soft-hearted—a woman, or something of that kind, don't read Shane Leslie's exquisite little poem on the newsboy.

Railway officials are another class of men who take great pride in their efficiency. Go to any booking-office, and name the smallest and remotest station on the line; before your words are well out of your mouth, the ticket is pushed towards you and the fare stated. The man who examines tickets at the barrier, spends hour after hour seeing that everyone goes to the right platform, and answering the unnecessary questions of agitated females. At Euston the other day the ticket-examiner was asked, "Which platform for New York, please?" "Number 15. Change at Liverpool," was the immediate reply. From long experience of human nature, they know at once if anyone attempts to pass without a ticket; they read the faces of innocent and guilty like a book; if a ticket has been lost by accident, your name and address are generally sufficient guarantee.

As for the guard, he is a figure of dignity and importance, not to say romance. His title recalls the

days of highway robbery, when an armed guard was as necessary for a journey as an overcoat. To-day he takes much the same position in a train as a captain does in a ship. He is summoned as arbiter in any difficulty, and his word "goes." He still seems to guard the train and to care for everyone's welfare. He greets you as you saunter along King's Cross platform, eyeing the night express, with an inviting, "Going down, sir?" and gives a kindly glance ever and anon till you disembark at Aberdeen. If you are to do some tricky, cross-country journey, he will call you when it is time to change, and pencil you a little note about your immediate future. He knows everything, and you feel certain that no one, save perhaps his wife, ever contradicts him.

In our museums and art galleries you will find stationed about at intervals a kind of super-policeman. They appear to be placed there by a grateful country, for it is a life of refined ease. Our fiercer criminals do not frequent these quiet haunts, and the custodians have little to do but gaze on works of priceless value and see that no one does anything odd. Rare it is, but not unknown, to find one of these men interested in the exhibits. On one occasion the reply to a query, "Are you interested in these mummies?" was, "No, sir, there's too many of them." Incidentally one may gather from this, that to visit a museum in a vague and aimless way is to create a distaste for all its contents.

Bus conductors are perhaps not quite so genial and chatty as in the spacious days of the leisurely horse-bus. Their conversation is for the most part of the day confined to "Q." But they are marvels of patience and helpfulness, especially to a woman with a baby, the aged, or the lame. They give change with astonish-

ing speed and accuracy, and remember their table of fares, even when passengers demand obscure places. They indulge in pleasantry sometimes, and are invariably good-humoured. If they have a grievance, they pour it forth, in a most human and engaging way, to the passenger by the door.

Street hawkers are to be encouraged, for it is to be feared that civilisation will soon squeeze them out of existence. Buy a little toy from them every now and again. Fruit from costers can also be safely bought, for it is only when a particular fruit is cheap and plentiful that they trade in it. Flower-sellers make bright spots in grey streets, and deserve encouragement too. As for sandwich-men, we can in nowise hope that they will be preserved, for it is merely degrading to human nature to be employed in this way.

As soon as the cold weather sets in, you may have the good luck to hear a muffin bell. In side streets of the inner suburbs a man may often be seen with a tray on his head, covered with green baize, and a bell in his hand. The muffins that he carries seem so much more festive than those you buy in a shop, and he is often heard on one of those wet depressing days, when hot toast for tea is indicated.

The pavement artist deserves a penny for the brave fight he puts up against the counter-attraction of the cinema. But the man who actually draws on the pavement is to be encouraged rather than the man who carries about sketches on wood; the latter is heartily despised by the genuine R.A. (Road Artist).

The town-crier has been squeezed out by the newspaper. He still lingers in some remote places. I heard him not so very long ago in Aberdovey (North Wales) announcing forthcoming village events with a bell.

A town-crier in full activity is still to be seen at the little ancient seaside Southwold (Suffolk). He is complete with red braid and cocked hat, and calls upon the people to "know then" that there will be a regatta, or a sale, or a reward for a lost bag, and ends with "God save the King." As a proof that an old custom dies hard, it is well to note, not only that town-criers still carry on their work, but that they even have a yearly competition for a champion bell and prize, struggled for by a considerable number from all parts of England.

In country places rather than towns you will find a knife-grinder, or a chair-mender, going his rounds with his apparatus, but these two are becoming rarer, owing to the widespread service of the large stores with their fleets of motor-cars. These bring all you want to your door, from a button-hook to a funeral. I asked a delivery-man once if his firm did anything for our souls, as well as our bodies, and he promptly replied that "there *was* a sort of mission connected with the stores," but his acquaintance with it was semi-detached, and I pressed the matter no further.

A man that it will take a great deal to push out is the strange wanderer in London's respectable, but not aristocratic, streets and squares—the cat's-meat man. He has a little push-cart, containing slices of meat on skewers, and these he sells to owners of cats for a penny each. The cats all know his cry of "'Smeat. 'Smeat," and come round expectant and purring from all quarters.

The Guardsman on duty in Whitehall<sup>1</sup> sits so firmly and quietly on his horse, that I was hardly surprised when my little niece asked me if he were

<sup>1</sup> See page 60.

alive; soon afterwards she asked whether Nelson on his column were alive too. One seemed quite as likely as the other.

Close by, I well remember a figure familiar enough in the end of last century, but now gone: a woman kept cows, and sold milk, at a stall in St. James's Park, near Whitehall. The privilege had been granted to her family by Charles II., because a glass of milk had been given to his father as he walked across the park to his execution. Such a bit of history might well have been kept up.



## CHAPTER VIII

### STREETS AND SHOPS

WITH your map of London continually at hand you will soon know the main thoroughfares, or "arteries" as we call them, especially if you mark them in red ink. The trouble to a stranger consists in the maddening way in which our streets change their names as they go, without any apparent reason. Their very names, too, are often a mere oral tradition. Thus, if you start from St. Paul's, say, you get into Newgate Street, cross Holborn Circus, and you are in Holborn, soon you are in New Oxford Street which mysteriously becomes Oxford Street (nobody knows why or where), while High Holborn has sloped quietly away and Oxford Street fades somewhere into Bayswater Road. Sometimes the name of a street is actually written up in some modest corner, and this is a great help. Policemen and bus conductors are the best guides, the former for byways, and the latter for highways. Getting lost in London is an amusing experience, and you should never take a taxi if you lose yourself, as this is an unsportsman-like way out of the difficulty.

There are certain streets that ought not to be missed, especially those that have added a word to the language. "Wardour Street ancestors" suggests the portraits, of quasi-ancient date, that are bought by people with no ancestors to speak of. "Tottenham Court Road furniture" implies a rather ornate, fumed-oak type

of would-be old-fashioned tables and cupboards. The name Pall Mall had its origin in "paille maille" (Latin, *pila mallea*), a game something like croquet, that used to be played there. We have the word "pell-mell," meaning mixed or confused.

Certain streets seem devoted to women's wants, others to men's. Regent Street and Bond Street are the homes of fashion, and if you are in the mood it would be well to start at the Marble Arch, walk along the north side of Oxford Street till you reach Bond Street. Go down this, crossing and recrossing the famous little lane as you see shops that strike you. At the bottom, in Piccadilly, turn to the left and when you reach the Circus turn up to the left along Regent Street. Spend an hour in Liberty's near the top. You may hear the St. George clock, and see the dragon struck, at the hour. It is a wise precaution to leave your purse at home on these occasions.

Bookshops are to be found almost everywhere, but Charing Cross Road and Paternoster Row are specially endowed with them.

The Strand has the very spirit of London pervading it, but it is quite indescribable. Like Piccadilly, it yields its joys to the leisurely pedestrian. You must neither hurry, nor require anything for feminine attire. Be sure to notice that, standing outside Romano's, you can see the time on the Law Courts' clock.

For complete contrast, walk along Farringdon Street, where you get one of those really entertaining things—a street market.

Fleet Street and its tributary lanes and alleys are devoted to the Press. This, too, gives a word to the language: to say that a piece of news is "merely Fleet Street" implies that it is not cold fact.



Harley Street is devoted to doctors, and to go down it, and watch the gentle motors moving as if in a sick-room, makes you feel as if you were awaiting some operation.

Russell Square (in Bloomsbury) and Buckingham Street (off the Strand) vie with each other in being "the home of lost causes."

Park Lane is regarded as the lair of millionaires. A pleasant way to see it, and incidentally the Park, is to choose a sunny morning, and mount on the top of a bus starting from the Marble Arch and going along by Knightsbridge to Kensington. You can get a fine peep of the Roman Catholic Cathedral at Westminster, tapering up in the distance. You will also see a group of three statues to Shakespeare, Dante and Milton (near the south end of Park Lane). As you emerge by Hyde Park Corner you must look at the newly erected war memorial, a sculptured gun, with figures of soldiers guarding it. You will soon find the Park again on your right, with the Albert Memorial. If by this time it has begun to rain, you can finish your trip at the shopping centre of Kensington High Street (where covered ways are ready to receive and tempt you) and return by Underground to "anywhere." The Underground is always to be recommended if (a) it is wet or cold, (b) you are in a hurry, (c) you are not sure of your route. Mental effort is reduced to a minimum. You go to a little hole labelled "Book Here" in red light, state the name of the place or street you want; a ticket is shot at you, and then you pass to the lift; the man will tell you where to change, if necessary; directions are posted up everywhere, and you simply move from point to point until you arrive, very much as the maid

from the Holy Land found Gilbert à Becket. You feel rather like a parcel. Of course the time you spend underground is wasted, for studying London. You can, however, study the people, who hurry from habit, and have acquired the "tube stare" of sheer vacancy.

If you are even only a few days in London, your business or pleasure is sure to take you to Charing Cross. Indeed they say that if you stand at the corner where the Telegraph Office is, you will see everyone you know, in time. There is much to look at, but do not fail to notice the life-like statue of Charles I., placed (not intentionally, we hope) so that he appears to be always looking down to the scene of his execution. Cross over and look closely at the pedestal with its soft-coloured stone. A romantic statue is this, in every way. It was ordered to be destroyed during the Commonwealth, but was hidden by a loyal citizen in his garden till a more favourable moment. On 30 January every year it is decorated with wreaths, placed there by the faithful. It is not generally known that we still have a Jacobite Society. But England harbours with unconcern every shade of opinion and thought—even a Society of Flat-earthists.

Trafalgar Square has some other statues, of which Gordon is the pleasantest. Nelson is too high up to see, and the tame lions at his feet seem mostly useful for children to climb on, and for policemen to park their waterproof capes.

Owing to its central position, this square is generally the one chosen for any political demonstration. People in England who have decided opinions are fond of marching somewhere, to let others know how deeply they feel about them. Women, perhaps, will march from Yorkshire to hold a meeting in Trafalgar

Square, carrying banners to display their opinions. It may be "No Strikes," or "No Vaccination," or "No Vivisection" — it is usually No Something. Londoners look on with an indulgent smile, and the evening papers report that perfect order was maintained by the police.

A bus ride from Trafalgar Square to Victoria will show you a great deal in ten minutes, or ten hours, if you get off to see things properly. The best plan is to see it rapidly first, and make a note of the places to be visited more at leisure.

There is first of all the Admiralty on the right as you go down Whitehall. Like the Navy, it attracts no attention to itself, but the stone screen in front is one of the finest examples of Adam's work.

On the left up a side street St. Paul's can be glimpsed; and up a further turning is Scotland Yard, where umbrellas go to, and where sometimes crime is tracked as well. The Cenotaph you cannot miss. But Downing Street, on the right, may easily be overlooked if you are not quick. Parliament Square gives you Big Ben and the "House," the Abbey, St. Margaret's and one or two interesting statues. Then come Dean's Yard and Westminster School and, a little farther on, the Roman Catholic Cathedral. It is the cheapest ride for a penny that the world affords.

Cheapside, whose very name is a relic, can be happily seen from the top of a bus; if time permits, you can continually get off the bus, investigate anything that takes your fancy, and jump on another. It may be the same bus, for traffic hold-ups are frequent enough. Start at Holborn Circus, and look at the unique shop, Negretti and Zambra, where the weather comes from. Nearly opposite is St. Andrew's

Church, oddly situated on the low level, with a sunken street on one side. (See chapter x.)

From Holborn Viaduct you go into Newgate Street, passing the Old Bailey, of sinister associations. The General Post Office (once the site of Christ's Hospital) is on your left, and Paternoster Row with all its ramifications on your right. Just as Newgate becomes Cheapside, you can see St. Paul's, and, commanding things in general, a statue of Peel, the father of the "bobbies." About halfway down on the left of Cheapside is King Street, with the Guildhall, where Gog and Magog live, and the yard-measure, and some other things. "At the corner of Wood Street" is the famous plane, associated rather whimsically with Wordsworth.

Notice as you pass along (if indeed you have managed to reach so far before nightfall, since you will want to get off to see more at every turn) the names of the funny little alleys—hardly streets at all—that lead away right and left. "Poultry" is part of Cheapside itself. On the right the chief feature is Bow Church. Now you are really in the heart of things. For a true Londoner, or Cockney, is defined as one who is born within the sound of Bow Bells. "I'm sure I don't know," said the Great Bell of Bow in the nursery rime. Children must be shown this. (See also chapter x.)

Farther along on the right is the famous clock shop—Bennet's. The clock outside with its big figures suggests another Gog and Magog.

The open space that Cheapside emerges into is packed with excitement. The Mansion House of the Lord Mayor, the Royal Exchange, "The Old Lady of Threadneedle Street," Walbrook, Cornhill, even the Underground Bank station is a sight. Take a bus



Nathaniel Kimball

CLOTH FAIR

going to London Bridge, and then you will see the Monument as you pass, and have the experience of crossing the river where it was first bridged, and *only* bridged, till fairly recent times, and where so many terrible things have happened. On the other side, leave the bus, and dip down the stairs on the left, leading into some narrow streets. Then you are in the thick of London as she is, in earnest, very busy "handling the goods," and dirty with the dirt of centuries.

Refresh yourself, on the opposite side of the road, in the cool precincts of Southwark Cathedral, more lovable than some of the larger ones because placed right down in the midst of a good deal of squalor. A horrible example of the lack of taste in the eighteenth century faces you immediately, and might well be removed from such a fine building: a life-size figure of a man reclining, with robes and full-bottomed wig, all carved in stone, and a winged cherub head gazing from above. A "poem" of some length, cut in the stone tablet, contains these lines:

His virtues and his PILLS are soe well known  
That envy cant confine them under stone.

It is hardly to be wondered at that Montesquieu, after a two years' stay in England, said that we had no religion at all, so far as he could observe. (This cathedral was left for nine years without a roof, 1830-9.)

To recover your poise, go back a few centuries in your mind, and look for the relics of Norman work, and a part of a door with the zigzag ornament. Those who are interested in English oak-work must ask to see the oak bosses preserved from the wooden vault of the old nave, a mixture of the beautiful and the humoresque. There is also a fine effigy in oak

Piccadilly must be enjoyed in a leisurely way, on foot, in spring. The sun is always shining there, and no one looks worried. There are shops in it, but of so elevated and reserved a nature that one hesitates to apply so vulgar a term to them. They are rather places where certain articles can be observed, ordered, obtained. Piccadilly Circus,<sup>1</sup> to start with, is as gay and careless a centre as Ludgate Circus is businesslike and harassed. As you go west you will have St. James's Church on the left—a church that is regarded as a stepping-stone to a bishopric. Sitting on its doorstep is the new building of the Midland Bank—a little gem of architecture, shining among most of the pretentious and plentiful banks like a good deed in a naughty world.

On the right is Burlington House with the Royal Academy. If you go in to see the pictures, call it a day and do nothing else, for the Academy headache is quite enough. Bond Street, too, is part of a special shopping tour, so pass it. The next allurements are St. James's Street and Clubland, which needs more than a casual glance. For lunch drop into Hatched's, if you care for history, or into the Ritz, if you prefer modernity. Notice the new shops on the site of old Devonshire House, and cast your opinion on their architecture.

A little farther along is White Horse Street, short and narrow, leading without a moment's notice into a little market-place. If you were dropped here by an aeroplane you would think you were in a quiet country town, so unlike is it to the usual London street. Passages leading away from it look neglected and almost disreputable. If you push through a very short way, you are out again in the fashionable world

<sup>1</sup> See page 7.

of Curzon Street. This odd little spot is called "Shepherd Market," with no reference to sheep, but after the architect Edward Shepherd, who lived in Wharncliffe House near by.

Returning to Piccadilly, you have one of the loveliest bits of London—the Green Park, which is not at all like a town park, but undulating and careless as the grounds of a country mansion. On a spring morning or an October afternoon you will stray into it, beckoned by the stately buildings in the misty distance. In fact, Piccadilly is as much beset with temptations to leave it as was ever the Pilgrim's path from the City of Destruction. Keep on the right side and look in at the windows of the clubs. Here you shall see the Englishman in his easy-chair, with his paper, full of conscious rectitude and superiority to the common herd, but in reality almost at death's door with boredom. And so you come to Apsley House, with its memories of the Duke of Wellington. The exceedingly strong and high iron palings to Apsley House should be noticed, as they recall a rather absurd and humiliating occasion in Wellington's career. He who had conquered Napoleon, he who was "the hero of a hundred fights," was afraid of an English mob, who threatened to wreck his house at the time of the Reform Bill, and on the anniversary of Waterloo, at that!

But some were faithful, as the following story shows. It was at this dangerous crossing that one of his admirers waited six years for a chance to help the old hero across. When the opportunity came, and he bowed low with the words, "This is the proudest moment of my life," Wellington rewarded him with, "Don't be a dashed fool!"

Nearly opposite Apsley House is an interesting relic



of the days when luggage and loads of all kinds were chiefly carried by men. A benefactor erected a porter's rest, a kind of shelf raised on pillars, just shoulder-high, on which the man could support his load for a few minutes without unstrapping it.

At Hyde Park Corner, Piccadilly becomes some other road, the name of which I have never been able to discover. Perhaps you will be run over just here, and be taken into St. George's Hospital, and be returned to your friends in better health than ever before. It is almost worth an accident to see one of our hospitals in this intimate way.

Clubland ought to be the subject of a separate chapter, but there is very little allowed to flow forth about its affairs. You have of course heard of the Athenæum Club, over there, wherever you come from, and hope to read all about it. Rule II. of the club should suffice to put you in your proper place. This rule enables the committee to elect, every year, NINE men of distinguished eminence. As the club has been established for over a hundred years, the roll of members may be considered interesting. (A history of the club has been published, giving the list, with notes.) Great lawyers, physicians, surgeons, authors and so forth, while bishops seem like blackberries. Lord Balfour once described the club as enjoying "undiluted distinction."

Over the portico is a statue of the goddess after whom the club is named, and her head serves as its crest, though were she to descend from Olympus to visit her club, she would not be allowed to enter. As may be guessed, the Athenæum has from its early years been a favourite target for the wit of those who have not been invited within its portals, and often of

those who have. Bishops are specially provocative of mirth, and provide a fine background for a missing umbrella. Theodore Hook, the famous wit of the earlier nineteenth century (himself a member), wrote:

There's first the Athenæum Club, so wise, there's not a man  
of it

That has not sense enough for six (in fact that is the plan  
of it).

The very waiters answer you in eloquence Socratical,  
And always place the knives and forks in order mathematical.  
Then opposite the *mental* Club you'll find the *regimental* one.

Soho is a region "sui generis." Dip down south from the east end of Oxford Street, or push up north from Shaftesbury Avenue, one day, about one o'clock, when you are exhausted by tracing Dickens, and very hungry. Soho will give you the maximum of well-cooked food, at the minimum of time and cost.

London has not been glanced at unless you have walked down Chancery Lane, the lair of the lawyers, said to be the oldest street in town. Hansom-cabs used to go down it with "two slides and a jump," symbolic of the speed of the Law.

Euston Road is worth knowing for practical purposes, since several railway termini are in it. King's Cross (L.N.E.R.), St. Pancras (L.M.S.), and Euston (L.M.S.), all debouch on to a spacious road, which narrows down just where traffic is very thick, into a dangerous little "neck." Here you can buy accessories for the bath, ice-creams and tomb-stones. Since I was a child this combination has puzzled me; there must have been some connection originally. Geysers are dangerous things, and so are ice-creams, and that may be the explanation. As though instinctively, shops for motor-cars have congregated there of late years,

and if ever any object needed a kind of "memento mori," it is a motor-car.

After this cheerful interlude, the road opens out into width and residential dignity, taking on, as though by baptismal regeneration, the new name of Marylebone Road, with expensive flats, endless doctors, and a workhouse conveniently and cynically near. Wax-works, and then two more railway termini—Baker Street and Marylebone. The usual route to the next great terminus, Paddington, lies through another narrow little street, called Chapel Street, containing Edgware Road Station (you must not expect in England that Edgware Road Station shall be in Edgware Road). After this Praed Street brings you to Paddington, where you start for Cornwall, and there you are.



The Gate house & Church Towers  
Lambeth Palace



## CHAPTER IX

### HOW TO SPEND A WET AFTERNOON OR AN ODD HOUR IN LONDON

THERE are obvious places to see, according to one's hobbies and tastes: St. Paul's, St. Bartholomew's (close to it, and far more interesting, with its Norman arches and ambulatory), Westminster Abbey, the Tower, British Museum, South Kensington Museums of Science, Art, Natural History, Engineering and what not, the National Picture Galleries. The secret of enjoying any one of these is to go in search of only *one* definite thing. Make straight for the Rosetta Stone, or Amenhotep IV., the bust of Marcus Aurelius, or the Magna Carta. So, you shall have attention and respect from the officials, very little fatigue, and a great deal of incidental pleasure. Take a small notebook and make rough sketches of an arch, or the plan of a picture, an Egyptian boat, or a rare bird. Such scraps are more valuable than elaborate diaries or written descriptions.

But more characteristic of England than any of these show places is the Record Office, in Chancery Lane. It is open and free every day, from two to four p.m. Every school-child knows about the Domesday Book, the more advanced can tell you what it contains and why it was compiled. But not one in a thousand knows where it is, and not one in ten thousand has

seen it. And yet here it is. ("Domesday" is a corruption of "Domus Dei," the house of the Lord, i.e. Winchester Cathedral, where the book was kept.)

"No doubt the indifference is largely due to want of announcement, for the Record Office Museum, with Domesday, and a thousand other historical documents of surpassing interest—Trafalgar and Waterloo dispatches, Guy Fawkes's confession under torture, the Papal Bull which made our kings 'Defender of the Faith,' and what not else?—does not advertise. It seems, being governmental, ashamed to herald its existence. That is our Government way. The travelled Englishman does not go into Chancery Lane, finding it too near at hand" (from *Unknown London*).

As the phrase "Papal Bull" often occurs in history, it may be interesting to note the origin of the word "Bull" in this connection. We are familiar with the use of a seal to press on wax as a kind of signature. The Pope used for this purpose the Roman "bullæ," a small flat round amulet of gold. From this, any document that he assented to in this way was called a "Bull."

In a visit to Westminster Abbey, a thing to make for is the waxworks—another instance of neglect on the part of Londoners. These are housed in a little upper chamber. What are waxworks doing in the Abbey, of all places? Well, it used to be a custom for wax images to be carried at a funeral, in the old Roman style; so that they are not really incongruous among so many tomb-stones. The figure of Nelson is startlingly realistic; one sustains a turn on being suddenly confronted with it. Now, Nelson is buried in St. Paul's, and his effigy might naturally be there too. But apparently it was put in the Abbey to attract sightseers

—in short, a speculation of the vergers: an odd fulfilment of Nelson's expectation of Westminster Abbey.

King Charles II. looks, as he invariably does in all his portraits, profoundly melancholy, suggesting the thought that his "merriment" was a mask, or an escape from something far otherwise.

A wet afternoon is quite suitable for the waxworks, and for many of the rather regrettable stone monuments that clutter up the Abbey. But choose a sunny hour to see the Unknown Warrior's grave. The light streaming in through the stained glass, and the glimpses of sunshine out in the cloisters, make the old Abbey look its very best, and the "all sorts" of people that come to look at the grave are full of real reverence, and move about in a quiet but homely way, just as if it were their own son, brother, or husband that was buried there. Spare a minute to go through the little door into the cloisters, and find on the wall (to the left) a stone slab of the date 1688, with the simple inscription:

Iane Lister, dear childe.

In the summer months, the Academy will do to waste an hour in. But more worth seeing, always open and quite free, is the modest little Diploma Gallery on the right of the entrance to the Academy. Here are placed the pictures by virtue of which the Royal Academicians received their diploma, and some other treasures. Especially noteworthy is a copy of Leonardo's "Last Supper," by Marco d'Oggiono, Leonardo's greatest pupil, who died during his master's lifetime. The original picture is so irreparably damaged that this contemporary copy is invaluable.

The London Museum gives you a profitable afternoon if you are studying London. Follow either Pall



Poets' Corner  
Westminster Abbey

Mall or St. James's Street down to the courtyard of St. James's Palace, and walk in on any day (free on a Monday, and a small charge on other days). Upstairs are rather dreary Victorian and Georgian relics of great respectability, but downstairs are some real thrillers.

There is the Roman galley, as it was found when they were digging the site for the new offices of the London County Council in Lambeth.

Harden your heart and go into the two old Newgate cells, with figures of the condemned men, almost too lifelike, or deathlike, and notice the actual prison door of Newgate, with its grisly associations.

The last cabriolet to be used in London gives you a missing link between the wheeled sedan-chair and the hansom cab. Close by it is the post-chaise that Wellington used at Waterloo.

Along one of the corridors is a series of very clever models of London at different periods, including one of the Fire of 1666 in progress. These would please any young people.

Make for any one of these things, and you will see plenty else by the way. Several are mentioned in other chapters, in connection with special subjects.

One of the hardest problems in London, even for an old citizen, is this: how to spend an hour that is suddenly thrust upon you. This usually occurs at one of the big stations, owing to just missing a train. And these stations vary considerably in their amenities for spending an odd hour. King's Cross and St. Pancras are hopeless: no sights near, no alluring shops, nothing to do but make a prolonged meal, read a book, or go to a cinema. Euston has catered for the emergency by providing a quite entertaining waiting-hall. Marylebone and Paddington are no better off than King's





HOUSE OF COMMONS

Cross. Liverpool Street and Broad Street give plenty of chance, if merely to wander about the City and look for London Wall, or Moorgate, or the Bank. And there's the Tower. London Bridge is particularly rich in things to see and do—Southwark Cathedral, the Bridge, St. Magnus the Martyr, Guy's, Billingsgate, the Monument. Charing Cross has the National Gallery close at hand.

Lincoln's Inn Fields, the largest square in London, is central, and close to numerous bus routes. Here is the Soane Museum, where a rich hour can be spent. To name one subject of interest, the pictures of Hogarth can be studied comfortably, and a vivid idea formed of what the eighteenth century was really

like. Hogarth is said to have started modern art in England, by bringing down, or up, the canvas from mythology to the portrayal of everyday life. His powerful pictures of tragedy and pathos, meanness and degradation, had the same kind of effect as the novels of Dickens in rousing public opinion to the necessity of reform.

An hour to spare at Cannon Street Station is a gift of the gods. As with Mr. Gladstone, three courses lie open to you. You can slip through Walbrook and be at once in the hub of London, unless, of course, you dally in the tiny lane itself. Or you can study the London Stone (see chapter vi.). Or you can go into St. Paul's, and see the Grinling Gibbons wood-carving, and notice the pigeons at the western entrance. A student of the eighteenth century will be amused at the statue of Queen Anne, "with her back to the church and her face to a public-house." As you are going by the Southern Railway, there may be time for all three courses.

Waterloo Station is now very spacious and well planned—different from the old days when not even the officials knew at which platform a train would arrive or depart, and when the old country farmer exclaimed, "No wonder Boney was beaten here." To see Waterloo, or any other of the big stations, at its best, choose nine o'clock in the morning, or half-past five in the evening. It is then thick with a stream of country and suburban dwellers, coming into business, or going home. If you happen to be going in an opposite direction to the main stream, it is very difficult to get through. But the etiquette is to make way for anyone heading for a platform. You cannot go slowly anywhere during the rush hours, since a

slow mover hinders everyone else, and on the Tubes especially the perpetual cry is, "Hurry on, there, please. . . . Hurry off there, please."

The other day I experimented in this matter. Finding myself at Liverpool Street Station with an hour and a half to spare, I determined to see the Tower.<sup>1</sup> A large policeman stood at the exit of the station, and I asked him to direct me the nearest way. Seeing me to be an obvious Londoner he feared there was some joke afoot, so he pointed out the way in a very sketchy, detached, thumb-over-shoulder style. I wandered through a maze of streets, seeing curious old churches and the strangest shops, and lanes with odd names. The name Axe was encouraging, suggestive of the Tower. It is evidently a well-conducted, moral neighbourhood, requiring few policemen, and none of the ordinary people knew how to get to the Tower; they could only helpfully remark that they knew it was "somewhere about." Some looked a little suspiciously at anyone wanting it. However, at last, suddenly, at a venturesome turn it loomed into view. So far off did it still seem that I was glad to sit and rest on one of the benches facing it; these were mainly occupied by working women and their babies. In the distance could be seen a long queue of sightseers from foreign strands, waiting their turn to go in. Then I knew I could not join them, and began to understand why we Londoners keep away. . . . Raleigh was within those thick walls for all those languishing years—Raleigh, the rover of Virginia and the Orinoco . . . and there the little princes were done to death. No—the Tower is not for English sightseers.

<sup>1</sup> See page 49.

## BOOKS

*Unknown London*, by W. G. Bell (John Lane).

*The City of London*, by P. H. Ditchfield (S.P.C.K.).

*Lunch-Time Rambles in Old London* (The Homeland Association). 6d. each.

The Catalogue of the Record Office Museum is very full and well illustrated.





## CHAPTER X

### SUNDAY IN LONDON

LONDON on a Sunday contrasts strangely with London in the week. In fact, London has three clearly-marked moods: Sunday mood, Saturday mood, ordinary mood. On Saturday everything is feverishly finishing up in the morning. Look in at a big bank just before noon, when it closes, and you will see the climax. In the afternoon everyone is either already gone, or going, or has come in from the suburbs for a *matinée* or other amusement. The railway stations are thronged with week-enders, and the main roads leading to the country have streams of cars and cycles.

On Sunday, if it were not for the buses, you would think it was a plague-stricken city. Cats come out and wash themselves in the road. A favourite Sunday sport, which I remember as a child, is to walk from any given spot to another (say from St. Pancras Church to the Bank) in the middle of the road.

For those who would study England, a service in the Church of England ought to be attended. St. Paul's, or Westminster Abbey, makes strong claims, but for very many reasons it is well to choose the Temple. If you know a barrister, you can get into the chancel, but it is no great loss if you cannot, as the pews are like the Bastille cells—you can neither stand, sit, nor kneel in any comfort. In the rotunda you can hear the singing of the psalms, one of the greatest musical

treats to be had, and you can see the exquisite marble pillars and the stained glass. The monuments of crusaders with legs crossed are all about. And you are in one of the four remaining "round churches" in England (the others are: St. Sepulchre, Cambridge; St. Sepulchre, Northampton; and Holy Trinity, Little Maplestead). These are constructed to copy the Holy Sepulchre in Palestine. The round portion of the Temple was completed in 1185.

Notice the Bidding. This is a stately call to prayer, read before the sermon, while the congregation stands. "Bid" is an old word for "pray," and is the same as "bead," a perforated ball used for counting (or "telling") prayers.

After the service, a barrister is greatly to be desired, to take you round the Temple Gardens, and through the rather intricate passages and courts, and to show you the Middle Temple Hall, which has a table made out of the timbers of Drake's ship, the *Golden Hind*. He sailed round the world in it under the humbler name of the *Pelican*.

A barrister's "chambers," with its musty tomes, gives an interesting side of English life. In 2 Brick Court are Goldsmith's chambers, which he was enabled to buy with the £500 gained from the production of *The Good-natured Man*. And the room is to be seen where he used to give uproarious dinners, with songs and games of blind-man's buff; and where he died (1774).

Readers of Lamb and Dickens will need no guide, but will wander about the Temple, picturing the old benchers, and imagining Ruth Pinch.

If you walk through to the Embankment, a very pleasant stroll awaits you, in almost any weather; you

can feed the sea-gulls at Blackfriars Bridge, and try to forget the trams.

A spot that is very appropriate for a Sunday pilgrimage is Smithfield. The meat market makes it unpleasant on a week-day, but there is a great peace on Sunday, as it does not lie on a bus route. St. Bartholomew's Hospital flanks one side, and on another is his church, with the tomb of the jester-founder—Rahere. Specially to be noted is its old arched entrance, covered now by a timbered house. Through this arch passed the "martyrs of Smithfield" to their death close by, a few yards away out in the square. The fires were lit for Roman Catholics as well as Protestants, and no one who cares the least bit for freedom of thought will fail to be moved in standing on this sacred site. It need hardly be added that no attention is called to the exact spot where the stake stood, although blackened stones and charred human bones were found in the middle of last century, during some excavations for a sewer. To feel the difference between those fiery days and the present, you need only walk along to Paternoster Row, close by, where Catholic and Protestant shops are next-door neighbours, who, instead of burning one another, "oblige one another with the change for half a sovereign."

There is a Martyrs' Memorial at Oxford, where Latimer and Ridley were burned. And another high up on the Sussex Downs, by Lewes; it was in front of the Star Hotel at Lewes that sixteen Protestants were burned to death in Mary's reign.

Sunday lectures are given at the British Museum, on a variety of subjects, during the winter. Sunday is also a great day for good concerts, well advertised in Saturday and Sunday papers. The ordinary theatres

are not open, but plays in plenty are produced by various dramatic societies—usually of the more intellectual type.

Ending the day with a service at the Abbey or elsewhere, you will not have found Sunday so dull as, at a hasty glance, you would declare it to be. A Frenchman said we were a nation of many religions and only one sauce. Certainly you will find in London a means of public worship of whatever school of thought you prefer, and no questions asked. As for sauce, many expensive restaurants, even on Sunday, are always ready to give the Frenchman the lie. But there is probably a French chef in their kitchen.

*Churches* of interest are innumerable, so it must suffice to choose only one or two for mention. As you pass through the streets, keep an eye for the graceful spires of the City churches. One of the most far-famed is St. Mary-le-Bow, Cheapside, whose spire is considered the best that Sir Christopher Wren achieved. The "Bow Bells" were originally six, and produced the "Whittington tune"; they have now been increased to twelve. "Bow" is the English of "de arcubus," for the church was so called because it was the first in London to be built on arches. The old church (burnt down in the Great Fire of 1666) had a very fine arched crypt, still remaining, of the time of William the Conqueror. This crypt was used by the Archbishop of Canterbury to judge certain cases which have now passed from his jurisdiction, and it was called "The Court of Arches." The name remains in the title "Dean of Arches," which might puzzle anyone who knew nothing of St. Mary-le-Bow.

St. Andrew's, Holborn, is situated in a curious way, because the Viaduct was built up against it, as it were,





Bow Church

in 1867. Dr. Sacheverell, who made such stir in Anne's reign, was rector here, and is buried in the sanctuary. John Hacket, rector at the time of the Great Rebellion, showed good courage. The use of the Prayer Book had been forbidden, but he continued to use it. One day two soldiers were sent to threaten him with instant death if he persisted in this. "Soldiers," he said, "I am doing my duty; do you do yours." And then he went on with the prayers. The soldiers left the church, overawed. The poor poet Chatterton, "the marvellous boy," was baptised here, and so was Disraeli, at the age of twelve.

In Ely Place, by Holborn Circus, is the church of St. Etheldreda, a gem from an architectural standpoint. Notice the fine effect of the interior as you go in by the south door. The crypt is very quiet in spite of the Holborn traffic, for its walls are eight feet thick. If you attend a service at St. Etheldreda's, and feel disposed for something of a contrast, slip out before the sermon and go back to Holborn Viaduct. Here you will find the famous "City Temple" (on no account to be confused with the Temple Church). This is not an architectural gem, and provides some other striking points of contrast with St. Etheldreda's.

There is a fascinating little Welsh church close to St. Paul's Cathedral—St. Benet's—where services are conducted in Welsh, and Welsh people are made to feel at home at once, by the kindly welcoming of the clergy and congregation.

St. Dunstan's-in-the-East (in addition to its interest as a homely resting-place for City workers) has a very lovely spire, conducing to one of the best architectural effects in London. As you look at it from the bottom of St. Dunstan's Hill, it seems to soar to the sky like



ST. DUNSTAN'S

a white flower amid the darker business houses framing it.

St. Giles's, Cripplegate, is chiefly known as the burial-place of Milton. John Foxe, who wrote the *Book of Martyrs*, and Martin Frobisher, the sailor, were also buried here. In this church, too, Oliver Cromwell was married to Elizabeth Bowchier. In the burial-ground, opposite the west door, is a bastion of the old London Wall. The Church of All Hallows, London Wall, has its vestry built on another of these bastions.

A part of London that you may be visiting for the sake of the docks, also affords a very old Norman church at East Ham. The walk is rather far from East Ham Station, but it is worth while for the sake of the apse and some other twelfth-century features.

Quite on the other side of London is old Chelsea Church, with its memories of Sir Thomas More; and here his heroic daughter, Margaret Roper, lies buried. Here Henry VIII. married Jane Seymour, the day after the execution of Anne Boleyn. It has the appearance of an old village church, and is one of the most interesting in London.

Close to South Kensington Museum is the Brompton Oratory, where you are sure of a welcome, and help in any difficulty, whatever the shade of your religious belief. The Roman Catholic Cathedral, off Victoria Street, is impossible to be overlooked, as it makes in London almost as prominent an object with its elegant tower as does St. Paul's with its dome.

The Church of All Hallows, Barking (just opposite Mark Lane Station), keeps the Prince of Wales's Lamp of the "Toc H," or Talbot House.

St. Martin's-in-the-Fields (Trafalgar Square) is the

King's parish church, and one of the Georges was churchwarden. Life would lose some savour if we had not the mental picture of George IV. going round with the offertory bag. If you want to see where the King's house is, this little anecdote may help you: Queen Alexandra was once visiting a hospital, and asked a little patient where she lived. "I live in Buckingham Palace Road, ma'am," said the child, "near Gorrings's shop." "Oh," cried the Queen, "how funny, so do I."

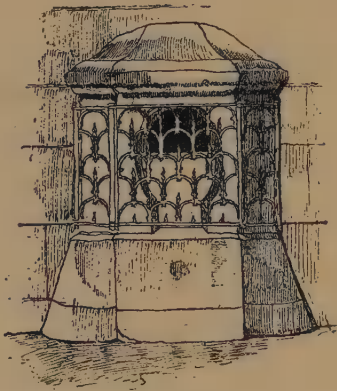
St. Pancras Church, in the Euston Road, is remarkable for its architecture, modelled on the style of a Greek temple. It has a very graceful appearance seen from a little distance along the road, from either direction, among the trees, especially on one of those sunny and misty days that lend a charm to the most prosy parts of London.

#### BOOKS

*A History of Architecture in London*, by Walter Godfrey (Batsford). For anyone who knows something of architecture, and wants details, dates, and careful illustrations.

*London Churches*, by T. F. Bumpus (Laurie). A very full account, and much readable matter.

*St. Paul's* (in the "Notes on the Cathedrals" series) (S.P.C.K.). A 2d. book, of things to look for, and historical facts.



"LONDON STONE," CANNON STREET

SECTION III  
DOWN IN THE COUNTRY







## CHAPTER XI

### INNS

LARGE hotels are much the same all over the world. Like a well-dressed man, the less they attract your attention the better. The end pages of Bradshaw will guide you to a reliable one in any big English town. But for anyone wishing to see English life, comfort is not the first consideration, and a night spent in a provincial or country inn will give ample compensation for lack of lifts, electric lights, and punctuality. Good food can be relied on, as long as great variety is not expected. Some characteristic dish of the locality can often be got, such as: Aylesbury ducks, Yorkshire cheeses, Cornish cream, Welsh light-cakes, Richmond "maids-of-honour," Greenwich whitebait, Whitstable oysters, Shrewsbury cakes, Cheddar cheese, Cornish pasties, Banbury cakes, Bath buns, Norfolk dumplings, Devonshire cider, York ham, Melton Mowbray pies.

In an old country inn you are actually living a bit of English history. Instead of gazing at old furniture in a museum, or reading about old customs in a textbook, or a novel, you sit on the old settles and chairs, you eat from the old tables, you see the old beams still supporting the old roofs, you talk in the old way to the same sort of old people that Chaucer and Shakespeare depicted.

If you have no definite object that takes you to the large towns, you could not devise a better scheme for studying English life, past and present, than this;

select one or more, according to the means and time at your disposal, from the inns mentioned here. Write to engage a room for one night. Take as little luggage as possible, and set out. Whether you have chosen a country town or a village, there are certain to be several places near of historical interest, walks with good views, and haunts of some literary light. Engage anyone in conversation who will talk—the innkeeper, the “boots,” a shopkeeper, the postmistress. Make notes of the trees, flowers, birds, soil, crops. Listen to the provincial speech and idiom. Mix with the villagers in the evening in the tap-room, or outside on the bench, and notice the kind of topics that engage them. If possible, make rough sketches of a few faces, the inn itself, the church, or a mill. The clergyman is generally only too glad of a chat with a stranger, and will help you to make the most of your visit, telling you all the historical oddities with accuracy. Just call at the vicarage quite boldly.

Take a Bradshaw with you, so that you may be able to push across country to some other inn that beckons you. These cross-country journeys are most entertaining. An enforced wait at a country junction can be spent very profitably in exploring the neighbourhood with the station-master’s advice and direction.

Do not omit to engage a room ahead of your arrival, for this ensures an aired bed, a good meal, and a hearty welcome. If it had been a hundred years ago, this precaution would have been unnecessary, for an inn at that time was a scene of continual entertainment. The roads were the great highways of transit, and passengers from the coach were received with tables ready laid, hot and cold dishes in plenty, waiters and

maids bustling in attendance, bedrooms comfortably warmed. But the coming of the locomotive saw the decay of all this life, and the rise of railway hotels, useful but dull. The tide is turning again, however, with the increase of motor traffic, and with a revived interest in old inns.

Only in a haphazard way can a few famous inns be mentioned here. Galleried inns are specially worth notice, as in the yards of these inns plays were produced, and Juliet bent down to Romeo beneath, and Jessica called to Lorenzo. A galleried yard is to be seen at the *George* at Huntingdon, near the Great North Road, where Dick Turpin plied his trade. Portions of this inn date from Tudor times.

Halfway between London and Brighton is the *George*, at *Crawley*, with grand old oak beams, low ceilings, winding and uneven passages, and legends of old coaching adventures, and of Rodney Stone.

The *King's Head*, at Aylesbury, lately given to the nation by Mr. Rothschild, has a fifteenth-century window, and several mediaeval relics.

The *Feathers*, at Ludlow, is famous for its fine timber-work.

The *George*, at Portsmouth, is where Nelson spent his last night in England: no further attraction seems needed.

Historical associations are to be found everywhere, but some caution must be observed in accepting all the tales told by innkeepers. It would seem that Elizabeth slept in more bedrooms than the nights she numbered; Dick Turpin lay hidden near a hundred hostelryes; the trees under which Henry VIII. danced with Anne Boleyn would make a forest. However, you get more fun by being over-credulous than under-

credulous, and genuine relics are plentiful enough. Such, for instance, is the old cock-pit still on view at the *Olde Fighting Cocks* at St. Albans. The octagonal timber building of the inn is situated near the mill and the ancient causeway, and if it is not older than the fourteenth century, that is old enough; and a pleasanter spot as a centre for historical expeditions could not be found.

At Fenny Stratford, in North-east Buckinghamshire, there are two famous coaching inns, called the *Cock* and the *Bull*. So many tales and rumours came from those who put up there, that the common phrase arose—"a Cock-and-Bull story."

The *Griffin*, at Amersham (Bucks), dates from Stuart times. This sleepy old village, with its moot-house and almshouses, makes a good study in itself.

Old furniture in inns should always be noted. The *Swan*, at Pagnell (Bucks), has some unique side-tables. And this little town has an interesting church and castle, situated in fine country for walks.

Broadway, near Evesham (Worcestershire), has, in the *Lygon Arms*, almost a museum of beautiful furniture. And here too is the *Fish* inn, with its curious steps.

Some country inns make a bid for artistic guests, by decorating the rooms, staircases and corridors with old furniture, brasses, bright drapery, and so forth. Such an attractive spot is the *Devonshire Arms*, near Bolton Abbey, with its lovely river and woods, in the West Riding of Yorks. This property of the Duke of Devonshire, right away in Yorkshire, is an amusing reminder of William the Conqueror's clever policy

The *Star*, at Alfriston, in Sussex, is one of the oldest inns, situated in a little town that is hardly short



H.C.

THE "TABARD" INN · SOUTHWARK ·  
FROM AN OLD ENGRAVING

of mediaeval. Harrison Ainsworth writes, in *Ovingdean Grange*:

“The *Star* at Alfriston, happily still existing, is one of the best specimens to be met with of an ancient English hostelry. Dating back as far as the early part of the sixteenth century, this curious old building was originally designed as a resting-place for pilgrims and mendicant friars, and was meant, moreover, to afford sanctuary to such as claimed ecclesiastical protection. The woodwork of the ancient hostelry is enriched with quaint and grotesque carvings, all of which are imbued with mediæval character and spirit” (quoted from Donald Maxwell’s *Unknown Sussex*).

The *Bear*, at Wantage, King Alfred’s town, in Berkshire, is in the interesting old market-place containing the well-known statue of the king.

The *Swan*, at Elstow (Beds), is charmingly primitive, and gives a fine opportunity for studying the village green, church and moot-house of Bunyan’s day, hardly altered at all, one would think.

The *George*, at Glastonbury, and the *Turk’s Head*, at Exeter, rival one another in antiquity. The latter, built in 1289, recalls in its name the days of the crusaders.

The highest inn is at Barras, in Westmorland.

At less than an hour’s run from Paddington, or Marylebone is Princes Risborough, where high up on the Chiltern slopes is the *Pink and Lily*, an inn which commands one of the finest views in England—great distances, and the rolling country of trees and meadows, peculiar to England. The name Princes Risborough is due to a moated palace of the Black Prince which once stood there. Whiteleaf Cross, a mysterious cross carved in the chalk of the hillside,

is within walking distance, and so are Pulpit Hill, Cymbeline's Mount, Chequers, the residence of our Prime Minister, and, of great historical interest and natural beauty, the home of John Hampden. It was in the porch of Kimbles Church that he made his great refusal to pay the ship-money. The inn itself, where you will be treated with great hospitality and sumptuous fare at little cost, is quite in keeping with its beautiful surroundings; the dining-room is a converted cowshed. Rupert Brooke used to stay at the inn, and wrote a little verse for it.

Far away, but worth more than all, is the *First and Last House*, at the Land's End. There you shall see the Atlantic, a deeper blue than anything you have ever seen. And it is absolutely beyond the postcard.

**London Inns.** Those who cannot afford time to visit country inns, must not fail to look at some famous ones in London. Chaucer's *Tabard* (Southwark), immortalised in his *Canterbury Tales*, has had a chequered career, burnt in the Great Fire, and rebuilt and altered in succeeding years. Near by are the *George* and the *White Hart*. Now, although Dickens shifted the names, it was at the *George* that Sam Weller first sprang into life; and this is one of the few galleried inns left in England.

The *Bull*, in Bishopsgate Street, is associated with a famous carrier, named Hobson, who plied for sixty years between Cambridge and the *Bull*, in the seventeenth century. He hired out horses to the Cambridge undergraduates, but insisted that the horse next the stable door should be taken, hence arose the expression: "Hobson's choice," meaning no choice at all. (This is related in the *Spectator*, No. 509.) When he died,

owing to an enforced holiday, Milton wrote some verses on him; Death, says Milton,

Showed him his room, where he must lodge that night,  
Pulled off his boots, and took away the light.

As for the *Cheshire Cheese*, even Londoners themselves go to see it. A little turning out of Fleet Street (Wine Office Court) brings you to an inn that is a chunk of the past, kept just as it was. Not like a museum, but full of life and go—sawdust on the floor, stiff wooden benches, smell of tobacco, funny odd corners. Choose the day of the week (it used to be Wednesday) when the famous pudding is served, containing beef, kidney, oysters, larks, mushrooms and what not. The tradition is that you may, if you can, have two helpings; and that if you can eat three helpings you may have your money back. A Welsh rare-bit completes the meal, accompanied by two churchwarden pipes. Polly, the parrot, now over forty years old, screams out, when the noise of the talking is at its height, "Put on a chop."<sup>1</sup> It is easy to imagine Dr. Johnson and Boswell, former habitués of the inn, sitting in one of the corners. Remember not to use the word "quaint": objected to anywhere in England, it is absolutely taboo in this inn.

Two restaurants near the Law Courts, much frequented by barristers, are *Grooms'* (famous for good coffee), and the *Cock*, mentioned by Tennyson.

A very profitable hour can be spent at Hatchet's, the *White Horse Cellar*, in Piccadilly, nearly opposite the *Ritz*. This was the most fashionable inn when coaching days were at their height, in the early nineteenth century. Hazlitt says:

<sup>1</sup> Polly died in the autumn of 1926.



“Some persons think that the noblest object in Nature is the ship launched on the bosom of the ocean; but give me, for my private satisfaction, the mail coaches that pour down Piccadilly of an evening, tear up the pavement, and devour the way before them to the Land’s End.”

Take a meal here, and ask to be shown the old stalls; and buy picture postcards of the coaching scenes of a hundred years ago. Of course the entrance is tiny and has to be discovered, but that adds to its piquancy.

Children will want to see the *Eagle* of the nursery rhyme:

Up and down the City Road,  
In and out the Eagle,  
That’s the way the money goes,  
Pop goes the weazel.

A little way outside London are some interesting inns, where a few pleasant hours can be spent on a fine day. Such are the *Star and Garter* at Richmond, the *Spaniards* at Hampstead, and the *Gate House* at Highgate.

One with a curious history is the *King and Tinker*, at Enfield Chase. As the name suggests, this is the site of one of the old royal hunting grounds. James I. had one day a fatiguing hunt, had become separated from his attendants, and sought a little refreshment at an alehouse. On the bench outside was a tinker, who knew that the king often hunted in the chase, and said that he wished he could see him. “Well,” said James, “if you mount behind me you will soon see him.” When they rode off together, the tinker asked how he should know the king when they came to him. “Oh,” said James, “that is easy, for everyone else will uncover

as he comes up." When they overtook the courtiers, the tinker found them *all* bareheaded. "But which is the king?" he cried. "Well," said James, "it must be either you or me."

Another inn with royal reminiscences is the *Victoria Hotel*, Swanage (Dorset). It was so named in honour of a visit of the young Princess Victoria with her mother, the Duchess of Kent, in 1833. Twenty-three years later (1856), the young Edward, Prince of Wales, was travelling incognito with two of his suite and wished to put up at the same hotel. The proprietor said he was very full, and could only let them have two beds, and that the young gentleman would have to sleep on the sofa. And this he very gaily did. But when, after his departure, the host discovered that it was his future king whom he had provided with a sofa, and that he had curtly refused to show "a mere boy" the room which the Princess Victoria had occupied, it is recorded sadly that "he stamped and swore."

Frequently you hear people complaining of the monotony of the fare in an English inn—eternal ham and eggs, cold beef, poor coffee, wines of no vintage, and so on. They certainly are poor in this way as compared with the Continent. But you do not come to England chiefly to eat, I take it, and it must be acknowledged that if our country inns woke up and became up-to-date, they would inevitably lose the very charm that makes them so attractive. What you lose in cuisine you make up in history and humour. And after all, well-cured ham and new-laid eggs support the tissues quite efficiently.

Signs and Names of Inns. Signs over shops, to

indicate what was for sale (for those who could not read), were quite common a hundred years ago. A few still remain and are worth noticing. A gilt ham may often be seen over a ham-and-beef shop; oil jars show an Italian warehouse; a Red Indian, or a man in Scottish kilt, means tobacco; a pole of red and white means a barber; an open umbrella speaks very plainly. These old signs were inconvenient, perhaps, but far pleasanter than the flickering electric-light signs that disfigure the streets at night.

Wine shops, just like other shops, had signs to invite customers. The old Roman evergreen bush over a wine shop was suggestive of refreshment, and a bush became a common inn sign throughout Europe. The expression "Good wine needs no bush" recalls this.

Again, inns gathered together a special clientele, of which the sign was a convenient symbol. Thus there was the *Sailors' Arms*, *The Three Cricketers*, *The Jolly Butchers*, *The Plough*, *The Fox and Hounds*, *The Coach and Horses*, etc.

The frequency of the sign *George* is due partly to our national saint, and partly to our kings. *The Royal Oak* commemorates Charles II. in hiding. *The King's Head* and various royal arms displayed may be due to loyalty, or may refer to an actual royal visit. For in the time of the early Georges it was no unusual thing for a king to put up at an inn, on the long stage journeys that were the only means of travel. It was at an inn that George III. wondered how the apple got inside the dumpling.

Many signs are of heraldic origin; and the red and blue lions, so rampant in country towns, are the modern rendering of the "gules" and "azure" of an earlier

day. Heraldic mottoes, and corruptions of them, as well as catch-phrases, often serve for signs; such as: *Live and let Live*, *The Case is Altered*, *The World turned Upside Down*, *The Hole in the Wall*, *Catch Her by the Way*, *The Man with a Load of Mischief*, *Who'd 'a' Thought It?* (an inn on the Berkshire Downs, Sparsholt, where you come across it unexpectedly round a corner), *No Hurry. Five Miles from Anywhere* (in the village of Upware on the River Cam), *Rest and be Thankful* (Exmoor).

The corruption can sometimes be traced, as, for instance, *The Goat and Compasses* is from "God Encompasseth Us"; and "The Bacchanalians" has become *The Bag o' Nails*; while even the modern "George Canning" has become *The George and Cannon*.

Signs are certainly useful as an attraction. *The Eight Bells* has been known to show a picture of only seven bells; people look in to point out the error—and take a glass. *The Five Alls* (at Marlborough) is very elaborate. Figures are painted on the sign-board, of a soldier, a priest, a king, a lawyer, and John Bull; and under each in turn: "I fight for all"; "I pray for all"; "I rule all"; "I plead for all"; "I pay for all." Sometimes you find a verse or couplet, such as:

This gate hangs high and hinders none,  
Refresh and pay and travel on.

At Barley (Herts) there is a fine sign right across the road of huntsmen and hounds; and *The Four Swans* across the road at Waltham Cross are very celebrated. *The Widow's Son*, at Acton, carries a legend of a lost boy, for whom, every Good Friday, a hot-cross-bun is hung out.

Animals figure largely in signs, and very oddly

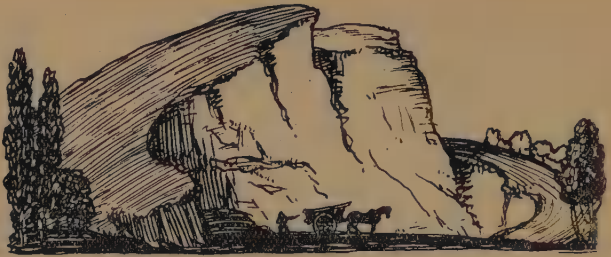
combined, probably owing to the amalgamation of two inns; thus: *The Whale and Crow*, *The Cat and Fiddle*, *The Hen and Razor*, *The Pig and Whistle*, *The Elephant and Castle*. This last reminds one of the fact that buses still keep the stage-coach habit of reckoning fares from one inn to another, and that even in London it is well to know some of the public-house names that conductors expect you to know, such as: *The Horse-shoe*, *The Angel* (although the angel has taken wing), *The Marquis of Granby*, *The Red-cap*, *Mother Shipton*, *The Britannia*, *The Cherry Tree*, *The Load of Hay*, *The World's End*. I once asked for a ticket to the End of the World, and got the ready reply, "Tuppence; cheap, ain't it?" The directions given to an old gentleman, "Yer goes to the Circus and changes into an Elephant," were sadly misunderstood by a small boy, who hoped for great transformation scenes.

In the London Museum there is a life-size model of an inn in Stuart times, and a collection of actual old signs. There is also a good collection of other signs, especially of tobacco shops, with an Indian or a Scot taking snuff; and there is one figure to denote a grocer.

### BOOKS

*Old English Inns* (Heinemann), by Cecil Aldin. Many and good illustrations, historical notes; a useful guide for choosing an inn to visit.

*Old Inns of England* (2 vols.) (Chapman and Hall), by C. G. Harper.



## CHAPTER XII

### FROM THE RAILWAY CARRIAGE

OF those who habitually use some one or other of our railways, how many retain beyond the years of their infancy the passion for looking out of the window? His train journey to the average city man or country farmer is something to be whiled away by conversation, a pipe or a newspaper. Perhaps the majority of train journeyers are not of the æsthetic temperament; or if so, they associate the train with matters of business rather than pleasure. It is a pity. For not only does the railway possess a unique scenery of its own, capable of supplying the artist with subjects worthy of his highest flights of fancy, but in many cases it penetrates the scenery of our country in a manner more intimate than do the great highways that attract the week-end joy-rider.

To appreciate the railway's own scenery you must be prepared to patronise branch lines and you must not be in a hurry. Let us start by visiting one or two picturesque stations. You will find some on the Great Western Railway, between Oxford and Worcester, which is a semi-main line, having no great regard for directness, as it follows the course of the river

through many meanderings. Take a look at the third station out of Oxford—Charlbury. You should sit astride the road bridge so as to get the village and river in the background. The most striking thing about the station to the artistic eye is a rustic black goods-shed of the old-fashioned type, making a pleasant link between the station architecture and the green foliage behind. On the platform there are some attractive little gardens, and in one corner a primitive fountain plays.

One of the smallest stations on the Great Western and one enjoying the best surroundings is Aston Rowant; it is on a single line which leaves the main line from London to Birmingham at Princes Risborough Junction, and runs along the foot of the Chiltern range. Aston Rowant has one platform, just long enough to accommodate the train of two carriages which serves the branch. Aston Rowant has its black goods-shed and few yards of sidings, with their quota of ill-assorted goods-trucks. Behind this is the range of Chiltern Hills purpled with heather. On the side of the line opposite the station is an orchard. The whole scene, especially on a Sunday morning early in spring, is as Arcadian as anything in England. The trucks look as though they were there to be played with, and when we find the Icknield Way, close at hand, we could almost imagine that those who made the Icknield Way also made the railway. As a matter of historical fact this line was promoted by local squires, the engineers showing a fine contempt for gradients, for the railway is one continuous switchback, and the train is even made to dip to get under some of the road bridges.

The underground electric railways of London are

as well known as St. Paul's itself, yet the discriminating eye will have favourite views, even in this region of colour and pictorial display. If you like something a little more atmospheric than the glare of tiles and electric lamps, you will find it at Great Portland Street on the Inner Circle, where the daylight streams in over the middle of the station, the downward rays



blurring the green and red lights that appear in the darkness beyond.

The Inner Circle provides many interesting glimpses which can only be momentarily enjoyed from the carriage window—the curving tunnel leading into the daylight at Baker Street; the triangle at Kensington; the mysterious subterranean goods depot, with its misty lights, at Aldersgate. But no station on the Underground line is more eerie, none more historic, none more remote, than Wapping. When you get out of the train you are left on a narrow ledge, whence you look through the oldest tunnel under the Thames, the one



Brunel built as a walking way, long before there were any underground railways in London, when Wapping was a fashionable riverside resort. In fear of meeting an inglorious end by suction on to the live rail, the traveller makes a careful exit, rising by a lift in company with seafaring folk, and emerges from a primitive booking-office, whence a narrow alley leads straight to the water's edge, and gives the stranger a peculiar sense of desolation, which is not diminished on returning to find a wilderness of slum behind. Then the station building to the West-ender, though it lacks the garish display that he finds at Piccadilly Circus, assumes an intimacy and even romance which are surely in part historic. We could truly say of Wapping station, "This is London."

If the scenery provided by railway buildings is of a small scale, and its beauty, unlike that of Aristotle's ideal, consists in its smallness, it is equally true that the railway, when it is present at Nature's grandest works, can emphasise and enhance the grandeur. Of the railway engineers and designers of the last century, many were also artists, who knew how to pay tribute to Nature when necessity or occasion demanded. They have left monuments worthy of comparison, both for their own beauty and for that of their surroundings, with Roman bridges and aqueducts.

Our country is rich in fine railway viaducts, some placed in fertile vales, some on the lonely moors, some spanning historic towns. If you ever happen to travel by the Somerset and Dorset line out of Bath, you will strike one of the most beautiful bits of the West of England, in the Monkton Combe and Limpley Stoke valleys. The line is a single one and leaves the Combe Down tunnel in a long curve, passing over a wooded

glade by a short but graceful viaduct, which is best seen from the road that skirts the ridge some 200 feet higher up, whence you can view the whole valley.

The L.N.E.R. has some good viaducts on the main line to Scotland. You cross the humble Mimram at Welwyn by a structure as majestic as the Pont de Gard at Nîmes. At Durham there is another, giving the traveller an excellent view of town, river and cathedral. The Forth Bridge, itself a masterpiece of modern engineering, will give you a queer sensation of smallness when you cross it for the first time, and if it is a bright summer evening, a memorable view up the river.

Another fine viaduct is that at Knucklas on the L.M.S. Mid-Wales line, near a summit of over 1100 feet above sea-level. If you keep a clear look-out of the window, you can anticipate it for some distance, as the railway makes some sharp curves in the ascent. Lonelier still is the great viaduct which takes the Great Western branch from Bala to Ffestiniog over the treeless valley of Cwm Prysor in the wild uplands of Merioneth. For some ten miles of this route there is scarcely a habitation to be seen.

It is worth noting some important railway summits. The Highland Railway on its way to Inverness reaches an altitude of over 1400 feet at Drumochter, passing every variety of inland beauty, including the historic pass of Killiecrankie. A Great Western branch brings you to a height nearly as great, at its terminus at Princetown on Dartmoor, making many detours in order to do so. For instance, a gate is passed on one side, and passed again higher up on the other. In Yorkshire the L.M.S. has a lofty station at Dent, situated between two tunnels and high above the

village of that name; and if you want a dizzy run, you can get it in the descent from Barras to Kirkby Stephen, in which the passenger is whirled through ever-changing moorland views, now through cuttings and now along a perilous ledge, high above the valley beneath. The story goes that the commodious waiting-room at Kirkby Stephen was once a hospital for passengers who had succumbed to the nervous excitement and physical shock due to the chase of ill-sprung coaches down the hill from Barras. At Barras, we may mention, is the highest public-house in England.

But there are lesser summits nearer at hand to the Londoner which are worth reaching for the sake of less majestic, but not less beautiful scenes. Two of the highest points reached by a train within fifty miles of Charing Cross are both on one of London's own lines—the Metropolitan, which was the first underground railway, but has penetrated some of the remotest spots of Bucks. There are few lonelier stations in the South of England than its northern terminus—Verney Junction. One summit, just beyond Amersham, has an altitude of 500 feet. From here the trains run down through beechwood and chalkland to Great Missenden, in one of the most delightful valleys in the Home Counties, still sleepy and agricultural, to renew their climb to Wendover, reaching the 500 feet level once more in a gap in the Chilterns, where you see two prominent hills on the right, Bodicomb and Combe.

Another minor summit is at Wadhurst Station (whose platforms, by the by, are curiously arranged end to end, not opposite), on the line from Hastings to Tonbridge, whose cuttings are covered with primroses in spring. The summit is best approached from

the Hastings side. You have a fine wooded valley on your left, with some charming farms and the oast-houses typical of this part; and you can enjoy, from the carriage window, a pleasant approach round a curve to the tunnel that runs under Wadhurst village.

The highest of the homeland summits is on a light railway which traverses the land of military manoeuvres between Basingstoke and Alton. It reaches a point some 700 feet high. It is a line of strategic importance and many battles have been fought near Lasham station.

Light railways, especially those of narrow gauge, have always a special appeal. The Ffestiniog Toy Railway is world-famous. Apart from the fascination of its double-ended engines and diminutive carriages, which truth to tell are not of the most comfortable, especially when plunged in the darkness and smoke of the long tunnel, it takes us through some of the best scenery Wales has to offer, climbing steeply through thick woods and ever and anon giving us a fresh glimpse of the river and valley below. It is, moreover, considering it dates from 1830, a remarkable piece of engineering, and its S-curves are examples of the ingenuity of early railway-builders. At one point, just before Tan-y-bwlch, the front and rear of a long train are to be seen going in opposite directions, though the story that the guard and engine-driver used to shake hands at this point must not be taken too literally.

More accessible from London is the Southwold Railway in Suffolk, extending some nine miles across marshes, and connecting the old town of Southwold with Halesworth on the main line. This narrow-gauge line is much abused for its slowness, but it has proved a blessing in helping to preserve Southwold from the contamination of modern influences. The service is

entirely discontinued on Sunday, so that beyond the arrival of a few charrs-à-bancs, the town is wrapped once a week in Sabbath peace. This is the place for a rest cure.

### BOOKS

*Our Home Railways* (2 vols.). P. Gordon. Not too technical.

*The Wonder Book of Railways*. H. Golding. For younger readers.





## CHAPTER XIII

### NAMES OF PLACES AND PEOPLE

OWING to the mixture of races in England, a fine field is afforded for tracing history in the names of towns, rivers, streets, and so on. There are books devoted to the subject that can be used for reference; but it is pleasanter to make a note, in a special little pocket-book, of any name that strikes you as curious or tell-tale. Such names as St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, Great Windmill Street, Long Acre, Haymarket, Cornhill, Walbrook, Cockspur Street, Barbican, Birdcage Walk, Blackfriars, Austin Friars, Crutched Friars, Minories, in the heart of London, are odd enough. Holbourne, or Holborn, and Fleet Street recall the rivers that once flowed there, while the Strand was once really a strand. Between the Strand and the Embankment there are four streets and a lane, named after George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham (the favourite of James I.), each word a street. "Of" Alley connects Duke Street and Buckingham Street. How the name would puzzle anyone who did not know its origin!

"Cheap" is an old word for a market; it appears not only in Cheapside and Chepstow, but in many a country town, in the form of "Chipping" (e.g. Chipping Barnet, Chipping Norton). The popular derivation of Charing Cross from "Chère Reine" (Edward's Queen Eleanor) is unreliable. "Ing" is a very common Saxon ending, and Charing appears

to have been a village between the towns of London and Westminster. Rotten Row, the special road for horse-riding in Hyde Park, is a corruption of "Route du Roi."

Any railway journey will provide some strange names as the stations are passed. If you cannot read the names as you pass, it means that you are going at a good rate. In many stations, even if the train stops, it is next to impossible to find the name; sometimes it may be painfully deciphered from a well-worn seat. It is part of our English humour to hide the identity of our stations as well as our streets. Here are a few queer names taken at random, that will do to start a collection: Billericay (Essex), Much Hadham (Herts), Nether Wallop (Hants), Potters Bar, Cut-throat Lane (Middlesex), Sewer's End (Essex). Dorset is very rich in odd names; we get Sydling St. Nicholas, Toller Porcorum, Cricket Malherbis, Ryme Intrinseca; and a group of villages, within a radius of ten miles, all containing the word "Puddle," said to be from an old Norman family named Pydle. There are Puddletown, Puddlehinton, Puddletrenthide, Alfpuddle, Tolpuddle, etc. Wales, of course, provides some rare specimens, of which the best loved is Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogyrwhryndrobwlchlantysiliogogogoch, which is a description of the village, including the names of two churches (*Llan* = Saint). Gibbet Common, in one or two places, is a sinister reminder of the days when highwaymen were occasionally caught and punished.

A good region for exploring names is the Weald, between the North and South Downs, in Kent, Surrey and Sussex. In mediaeval times this was England's Black Country; not so black as her modern one,

for wood, not coal, was the fuel. The ironworkers bared large tracts of the country of trees, for the furnaces. The ironworks were all abandoned when the more efficient coal-fields of the north were tapped. There must be still many specimens of Weald iron in various parts of England, but the only one I know personally is the fireplace in the town-hall of Guildford.

A very enjoyable week's task would be to stray over the Weald, merely collecting names that suggest ironworks; such as, Forge Farm, Hammer Moor, Cinder Hill, Culver Wood. The frequent ending "hurst" means wood, and shows where the original forests grew, before they were cut down to feed the furnaces. The last forge at Ashburnham was not abandoned till 1809.

The *endings* of place names are always worth noting, as they vary in different parts of the country, and show some history. Thus, in the eastern counties you get the East-Anglian "thorpe," meaning a farm or village, sometimes a separate word as in Burnham Thorpe, Nelson's birthplace. This is really a double, because "ham" is the same word as "home" and appears in hundreds of our towns and villages. "Hamlet" is a little home. "Town" takes the form of "ton" or "tun." A Danish equivalent is "by," and is common in the north-east, where the Danes settled.

"Bourn" or "burn" means a stream, and is of historical value when the stream has disappeared, as in the London Holborn. "Borough," "burg," "brough," "bury," suggest a larger town, for the ending means a fort, or walled town. "Combe" (west country) means a valley. The very common "ford" shows where a river was crossed before a bridge was built. The Saxon ending "ey" or "ea" means an



island, and throws light on the history of many an inland place that was once surrounded by water. Sheppey, Guernsey, Lundy, and numberless others, are plain enough; Athelney, King Alfred's hiding-place, was once an island. The "Isle of Ely" is thus a double name.

We associate the word "street" with towns and shops; but fairly often it is found in the depth of the country, attached to a tiny village or hamlet, such as Newgate Street (Herts), Bow Street (North Wales), Potter Street (Essex), Staple Street (Kent). These are traces of a Roman road; and a pleasant object for a walking tour can be found in picking out such names on a large-scale map (Hertfordshire is a good area), and trying to trace the old road—generally overgrown with grass, but quite discernible. The word appears very Roman-like in Chester-le-Street, but not quite so obviously in Stratford and Streatham.

Strange names arise by mere mischance occasionally, and if it is not too long ago, it is possible to explain them. In my own neighbourhood there is a road labelled "Saint Jones Road." As the road was laid out about the time of the canonisation of Joan of Arc, it is easy to guess what the name was meant to be. Probably the man entrusted with the painting of the name did the best he knew—perhaps he was a Welshman.

Americans will be interested to know that "Boston" is a softened form of St. Botolph's Town.

We may well have the name "England," for the termination "ing" is to be met with at every turn. It means any place where a family or little clan settled together, and seems to be even more primitive than "ham."

The ending "wick" means a town or village,

connected with the Latin "vicus" (hence the word "vicinity"). But there is another ending "wick" or "wich" from the Norse, meaning a creek or inlet or bay. Thus "vikings" meant the dwellers in the creeks. Now salt was obtained from bays, and the termination "wich" became associated with salt. Thus we have the inland town Droitwich, where salt is found.

Some of the narrow streets in the City (for instance, those leading from Cheapside) have names that recall their business in old days, when men of one trade kept together. Friday Street was devoted to fishmongers; for at the time of the Reformation it was made compulsory to eat fish on a Friday, since the slump in fasting might have ruined the fishing trade, and Elizabeth was too sensible to allow that. Honey Lane, Milk Street, Beer Lane, Bread Street, Poultry, Leather Lane, Petticoat Lane, Shoe Lane, Paternoster Row, with Amen Corner, are further instances. Booksellers Row, along the Strand, was cleared away some years ago, to widen the street. Make haste to see these charming old lanes before they are all cleared away to enable people to rush about faster.

Some other names are not so obvious. Cannon Street is a corruption of Candlewick, from the candle-makers. The origin of Piccadilly is not quite so certain; here is the usually accepted explanation: In the reign of James I. a starched collar came into fashion, called a "piccadillo." A Spanish shop for the sale of these collars was opened in this street (until then known as Portugal Street) and the name of the collars ousted the real name of the street.

A curious little "blind" square in Bloomsbury is called Queen Square. Which queen? There is a mystery statue in one corner, which is supposed to

represent Queen Anne, who had a palace near by; and there is still an underground passage to the church and the Larder Inn.

Names of people, as well as places, are often full of history. The prevalence of Smith is due to the fact that, whatever else a village lacked, there was always a forge. To-day, a forge is becoming a curiosity, and perhaps "Garage" will become a surname. Fleming shows an ancestry among the refugees from Flanders. Fletcher recalls the days of archery, as of course do Archer, Bowman and Arrowsmith. Webb and Webber are very common, on account of the widespread custom of home weaving.

"Wright" is an old word for "maker," appearing in the words "wheelwright," "shipwright," "playwright" and "wrought iron." Thus the surname Arkwright means a box-maker, Cartwright a cart-maker, and so on.

Jones is an example of the large number of names that merely mean "son of." Thus Jones means John's. This method of naming is particularly common in Wales. Only a generation ago, a boy named Hugh (the son of a man called Robert) would be called Hugh Robert's; but Hugh's son Edward would be Edward Hugh's. Thus the surname was continually shifting. In Wales to-day you can notice how names are being formed. Jones is so common that villagers differentiate thus: Jones the timber-merchant, Jones the Inn, Jones the draper, which soon become: Jones Timber, Jones Thinne, Jones Draper.

Names become strangely softened. Thus, Bruce is a corruption of Brewhouse; Bakehouse has become Bacchus, by false analogy with Latin. Sometimes the

patronymic blends with the name; the Welsh "Ap" (son of) accounts for the "p" in front of Pugh, Pritchard, Powell, Parry, etc.

Since people are apt to be a little fussy about their names, it is well to be careful both as to spelling and pronunciation. A Cornish Vivian cannot endure to have his name spelt Vyvyan, as this is an inferior branch of the family (and, of course, vice versa). The ffoliots must on no account be written with a capital. The Flemmings cannot bear to be given only one "m," though you would not think it mattered. Without inside information, some cannot be correctly pronounced; Marjoribanks is the stock example of this, but there are endless others. The safest course is to address a new acquaintance by merely fixing him with your eye and leaving his name alone. In fact it is considered bad form (owing, no doubt, to these difficulties) to name a person at all when conversing with him, or to say anyone's name aloud in a public place.

It would be an amusing pastime to jot down all the new names encountered in the day, and make a rough guess at their meaning. The name of person or place must be separated into syllables. The last syllable is usually the easiest. Allowance must be made for corruption or softening (e.g. Beaulieu has become Bewley). When you have made your guesses, submit them to the owner of the name, or to an inhabitant of the place. It will astonish you how little they know about it, but a local guidebook may often tell you, although of course hundreds of names are quite inexplicable.

#### BOOKS

*Romance of Names*, by E. Weekley (Methuen).

*Words and Places*, by I. Taylor (Dent).



## CHAPTER XIV

### VILLAGES

MANY young towns in our overseas dominions and in America have sprung into being with modern inventions, labour-saving devices, well-paved roads, and electric light all complete. If any citizen of such a town come to England, he will certainly enjoy a few hours in a real old village, that has kept its main features for a thousand years. No matter where he lands, such a village will not be far off. They are not isolated curios: the country is studded with them. They vary in style according to the county, but a few common characteristics may be mentioned, and some points that may be studied.

First of all, the distant view of a village is often singularly beautiful; this point can be studied on a long railway journey. At about a quarter of a mile from the line you will notice the queer-shaped little spire or squat grey tower of a church, with a few tiled cottages brilliant red in the sun, peeping out from between trees and hay-stacks. Seldom any sign of life beyond a cow or two, or a cart jolting on the white road that appears here and there. The best view to get of a village, however, is looking down from a hill—such a view as you can get of Selborne (Hants),<sup>1</sup> or Amersham or Chesham (Bucks).

In most villages there is a green in the centre, of ageless soft grass, often including some ancient oak, or other tree, that was sacred in a bygone age, probably

<sup>1</sup> See p. 23.

pagan. Here one can imagine the maypole-dancing, archery and other sports, as well as the rough justice that was carried out. The kind of ready punishment inflicted is shown by such relics as the stocks, still to be seen at Hadley (near Barnet), at White Waltham (Berks); by the churches of Alford, Abinger and Shalford (all near Guildford); at Lymm (Cheshire), in Ottery St. Mary (Devon), and in the church porch at Lostwithiel (Cornwall). And even London still has a pair, in the grounds of Hackney new parish church. The latest recorded instance of the use of the stocks seems to be that at Newbury Poultry Market in 1872, when a man was placed in them for disturbing Divine service in the parish church. Shakespeare's *King Lear* (II. ii. 129) gives an idea of the disgrace that this punishment implied. In the London Museum there is a collection of "scolds' bridles," a simpler means than the "ducking-stool" for dealing with a nagging wife. The stool can still be seen at Leominster (Hereford), and at Fordwich (Kent). Also there are pillories left at Rye (Sussex) and Coleshill (near Birmingham).

On the green was often a beautiful stone cross, with steps, on which a wayfarer could rest, or children could play. Cornwall is very rich in these crosses, but they are numerous all over England, and the names of places frequently show where they may be found. Northampton and Waltham and Geddington are the only ones remaining of those built to commemorate the places where Queen Eleanor's body rested. Sometimes the cross was enclosed in, or erected over, an open octagonal building, which served as a place for receiving market dues. The cross was very naturally the centre of all outdoor religious ceremonies, such as the close of

beating bounds at Rogation-tide; and it was the appropriate spot for a friar or wandering preacher to choose for addressing the villagers. Crosses are older than churches, for they were the centre of religious life before a church could be built.

A moot-house may sometimes be seen in a village. A room for meetings was built over the open pillared market-house. Amersham (Bucks), Chipping Campden (Glos) and Elstow (Beds) afford examples of different



kinds. These moot-houses were used for the chiefs of the village to arrange local affairs, the earliest germ of our Parliament and our local government.

The church is usually one of the oldest buildings, and is never without interest. Some churches are very old and some are very small, and claims are made by several to be the oldest or the smallest. It would be difficult to find one smaller than the one at Lullington, in Sussex. St. Nicholas (Yarmouth) has the widest nave.

There are so many things to look at in a church, beside the obvious points of architecture, that only a few can be mentioned. The porch was an important

spot in old days, used for a priest's room, or a school or a hermit's cell, and for many civil transactions. John Hampden's little brush with the authorities took place in the porch at Kimbles. Even now you will find public notices put up in the church porch.

Inside (it is to be hoped that you can get in), notice if the font is an ancient one, and which of the traditional shapes it takes—round, square or octagonal; whether there is a basin for holy water; a rood-screen; any good brasses; or old stained glass. You may find a "lazar-window," or "squint," about the purpose of which there is great uncertainty; but the usual explanation is that lepers were allowed in the side chapel, and the elements were passed to them through a slit in the wall, or they were allowed to see or squint at the elevation of the Host. Here and there you may find a chained Bible on the lectern (or the remains of a chain) dating from the time when a Bible was very costly. Many beautiful crosses and carvings and paintings were destroyed by Puritan zeal in the seventeenth century, and figures of saints were removed from their stone niches. Very fine brasses are to be seen in the chapel of Hampden's house (Bucks), and in the same county, at Chesham Bois church, is a beautiful specimen of a memorial brass to a "chrysom" child (that is, one who died while still wearing the sacred white vesture of its baptism). You have to lift up the bit of matting in the middle of the chancel in order to see it. There is another of a similar kind in the church at Lavenham (Suffolk). For the expression, see Shakespeare's *Henry V.*, II. iii.

Sometimes you will find an hour-glass-stand by the pulpit, from the days when sermons were timed in this way. Examples are still to be seen at Binfield



and Hurst (Berks), at South Stoke (Oxon), and at Chesham Bois (Bucks).

Old stained glass is now very rare. The Puritans smashed it because they thought it savoured of Popery. The Roundheads broke the windows with their pikes, and encouraged the people to smash them with stones, or arrows from their cross-bows. We have to thank Commander Fairfax for saving the lovely glass of York Minster, especially when we remember how the glass of Canterbury was ruthlessly broken.

A lych-gate (from Anglo-Saxon "lic," a body) was used for resting a coffin at a funeral. Many fine old ones remain, and new ones are frequently built, often rather absurdly, as an entrance to a garden.

The churchyard is of historical interest, being (like crosses) often older, as a sanctified spot, than the church itself, as missionary services were first held there. In mediaeval times religion was more a part of everyday life than it is to-day, and people gathered in the churchyard for all sorts of meetings, the acting of miracle plays, festivities, gossiping, and even business. Edward I. passed a statute to check this custom: "And the King commandeth and forbiddeth, that from henceforth neither Fairs nor Markets be kept in Churchyards, for the Honour of the Church."

Somewhere on the church or gate may often be found a sundial, with perhaps a moral inscription, such as, "Be about your business," "I count only the sunny hours," "So speed we; but the Reckoning bideth." Elmley Castle Village (Worcestershire), Isleworth (Middlesex), Eyam (Derbyshire), have remarkable sundials, but any of the old ones is worth a sketch or note, for they are fast disappearing (except as an affectation in suburban gardens), since probably

even the old bell-ringer is now provided with a wrist-watch.

Almost any old churchyard will have some interesting epitaphs, which are worth entering in a notebook, as an indication of character and religious feeling. Apparently the village stone-mason was often left to his own devices to turn out a neat verse. In the following he was quite serious, no doubt, and pleased with the result of his effort:

Here lies the body of William Bunn,  
Killed by the bursting of a gun.  
His name was not Bunn, but Wood.  
But Wood wouldn't rime with Gun,  
So I thought Bunn should.

Again, in the following, the humour is obviously unconscious, and adds to the poignancy of the grief expressed, in some indefinable way:

O cruel Death, how couldst thou be so unkind,  
As to take him before, and leave me behind?  
Thou shouldst have taken both if either,  
Which would have been more pleasing to the survivor.

Lydford in Devon has a long epitaph on a watch-maker, drawing out the analogy between a watch and human life, and showing a different kind of ingenuity from the usual doggerel rhyme. Of the latter the following is a fair specimen:

It was a cough that carried him off,  
It was a coffin they carried him off in.

After the church, the inn is usually a point of interest, and some sort of refreshment should be taken there, if only to get a glimpse of its interior. So far you may have roamed through the place without discovering its name. Ask for the post-office, where

the name is generally put up over the door, as "Little Puddlethorpe-cum-water Post Office." Often this is also the village shop, of the nature of Whiteley's—a universal provider. You must surely buy something in it, in order to have a chat with the owner. The mixture of goods has long been a source of merriment to Londoners. You ask for ham. "'Am . . . 'am . . . now where did I see the 'am?'" meditates the shopkeeper, as he dives under the counter, amid the cheese, the firewood and the paraffin.

Cottages vary greatly in style, but always have a beauty of some kind, whether they brighten the landscape with whitewashed walls and red roofs, or whether, as in Wales, their grey slate seems part of Nature herself. The following quotation from *The Observer* of 2 May, 1926, will suggest a few varieties of cottage to be on the look-out for:

#### SOME LOCAL STYLES

That the really old cottages are beautiful cannot be denied. A thousand instances prove it; the thatched cottages of Bedfordshire, with Elstow as an example; the glorious cottages of golden-glowing stone of many Cotswold villages; the tile-hung, sandstone-based houses of the Weald of Surrey, Sussex and Kent, under heavy roofs of Horsham slabs; the brick cottages of Hampshire, with their dignified string-courses; the old stone cottages of the Isle of Wight, as at Thorwell, matching for beauty the greater Tudor and Jacobean mansions; the cob cottages of Wilts and Devon, thatched and colour-washed—pink, white, lemon; the hardened stone cottages of Cornwall, squat, broad-based, with pent-houses and porches, massive chimneys, and heavily grouted stone roofs, as at Boscastle or St. Ives. So one might run the gamut of the counties, but three individual specimens shall be pointed to, fine examples of quite different styles: the fourteenth-century stone cottage at Tintagel, now the post-office, and the clergy-house at Alfriston in

Sussex; both now in the care of the National Trust; and the fine old cottage, a village shop, at Bignor, in Sussex, with its central hall recessed and the heavy roof carried from wing to wing on a great curving beam.

Try to see a cottage interior. Look for curious fireplaces, windows and window-seats, rafters, ingle-nooks, dressers, china ornaments, pewter plates and mugs, and the general arrangement of rooms and stairs.

More delightful to look at than to walk on, is the cobbled paving in many old villages and country towns; it is sometimes referred to as "petrified kidneys"; and whole streets are sometimes paved in this way (as in Clovelly), or it is used as a decorative feature, amid well-kept grass, as in the courts of Trinity College, Cambridge. A few years ago there was an old lady in Warwick who remembered the cobble pavement being *weeded* of its grass growth, in preparation for the Assizes. A good specimen of a cobbled road is the narrow Keere Street in Lewes (Sussex); which looks as impossible as the Clovelly High Street for wheeled traffic. But George IV. is said to have driven a four-in-hand down it, to the Grange at the foot.

In nearly every village there are some cottages whose higher floors overhang the lower ones. Such a widespread custom must have had a very definite purpose, but it is not quite certain what the purpose was—perhaps to keep the lower portion of the house dry. In towns it was probably to economise space. It was not done for the sake of beauty, we may be sure, and yet that has been the result.

Thatched roofs are now becoming rare, so any should be noticed. Sometimes these were consciously a work of art (e.g. at Beaulieu in Hampshire).

Chimneys, too, must have been often a source of

pride, to judge by their elaborations, and are frequently one of the leading things in the construction of a cottage. A collection merely of sketches of chimneys in England would make an interesting and informative possession.

No matter what time of the year, the cottage *gardens* will be worth looking at. It would be a poor specimen of a cottager if he did not wring the last ounce of show from his garden. Sometimes it is only about six feet square, but it is always bulging with blooms of some kind. There are some specially good ones in the Isle of Wight.

The pump on a village green, or in a courtyard, is a feature that is not long for this world, so make a sketch of any that you see. A wind-mill, too, is becoming very rare, much to the regret of artists. If the smithy is still existing, look at it with a view to history, for shortly it will become a smart garage, with advertisements of petrol, loudly coloured enough to catch the eye of the hurrying motorist. The name of the village, too, may have been duly notified on a yellow board, before you entered; but keep a stout heart, for it will take a long time before the whole of England (not to mention Wales and Cornwall) is civilised. A smithy will always be romantic. Placed at cross-roads, so as to catch customers from four directions, it was one of the basic reasons for the beginning of a town. An inn follows, then a cross or little church, possibly a shrine, then a market, and lo! a town.

An old thatched or tiled barn adds a very pleasant touch to a village scene. Different styles of barns should be noted, and whether there is an owl's doorway, that is, a loophole in the gable for this useful bird to pass in and out, and make war on rats and mice.

There is often a pond, or a river with a bridge, which greatly adds to the beauty of any place, by reflecting the sky, trees and masonry. Almshouses are usually worth investigating. In the immediate neighbourhood of a village there is sure to be a fine mansion with park and lawns, the modern equivalent of the ancient manor house. Amersham (Bucks) seems to present an example of nearly every feature mentioned, but almost every village will have some special scrap of history or folk-lore peculiar to itself.

As an instance of this, a curious relic of the days of highwaymen can be seen near Bramfield (Herts)—a place, by the way, where Thomas à Becket was rector. "Old Clibborn's Post" marks the spot where Walter Clibborn lies buried. The story runs like this: Clibborn was a simple, industrious party, who used to carry round cakes to sell in the inns on market days. By this means he discovered which men had taken a fair amount of money. Then, accompanied by his wife and three sons, he became a robber, waylaid the merchants, lifted their money, and murdered any that resisted. They were the terror of the district, until one night in December 1782 they were overpowered, and the chief robber was shot. Great surprise when he was found to be the dear old cake man! The next day people came from all the district round, and dragged his body to and fro in the furze-bushes (quite characteristic of the eighteenth century). The post was placed over his grave in the place where he was killed.

Any natural object at all out of the way is frequently assigned by the villagers to the work of the devil. At Stevenage (Herts) there are six mounds, or barrows, supposed by antiquarians to be of Danish origin; but this is not good enough for the countryside. Someone

thought them a blemish on the landscape and began to remove them; one was levelled away, but next morning it was in its old place, brought back in the night by the devil.

Other activities of the Devil are evident all over the country. The Devil's Apronful is a group of rocks in Wharfedale (Yorks). The Devil's Quoits, three large stones, are near Stanton Harcourt (Oxon), and his Arrows, three pillars, are near Boroughbridge (Yorks). His Pit, his Bellows and his Throat are in Cornwall, which also possesses Hell's Mouth. The Devil's Highway is the name given to the part of the old road that crosses Bagshot Heath. His Jumps and his Punchbowl are near Haslemere (Surrey). His Dyke is at Brighton. And some lovely hollows, containing rare and beautiful flowers, in the Stanner Rocks, near Radnor, are called the Devil's Garden.

Some of our villages have become famous merely for their astonishing beauty. Clovelly, near Bideford, in Devon (Bideford, by the way, is full of historical and literary associations), is on the sea, and one steep high street climbs up from the coast, with cobblestones and steps, and donkeys to navigate them; impossible for carts. The whitewashed stone cottages, with their brilliant fuchsias, give such a charming effect that people throng to see it, and the many chars-à-bancs are apt to destroy the simplicity they come to find. Some more remote villages in Cornwall, such as Newlyn and St. Ives, are quite as charming, and at present are overrun only by artists—quiet folk and too poor to spoil the general effect.

Curiously enough, it seems impossible to create a modern beautiful village. Chenies (Bucks) has been a fine attempt, but strikes at once an artificial note,

easily perceived when it is compared with such a little gem as Latimer, close by.

Sonning-on-Thames is notable, chiefly owing to the beautiful effect of its three bridges. Lavenham (Suffolk) is noted for its cottages of timber-work. Broadway (Worcestershire) has some stately stone houses, grey-roofed and cunningly situated, as well as its fine inn.

Preston-on-Stour (Glos) gives a lovely combination of church, green, with trees, and old timbered cottages. In the same county, some fine thatched and timbered cottages are at Chipping Campden. The whole Cotswold district is a rich field for this kind of exploration. So, too, is Sussex, where the riches are really embarrassing, and are continually being pressed on our notice by native poets and novelists.

East Anglia is more retiring, and is specially good for woodwork of all kinds in its churches—rood-screens, roof-moulding, and so on. At Corfe Castle (Dorset) are two cottages built by the mother of Henry VII., and they still bear the portcullis, the badge of the Tudors, carved on them.

But far more delightful than visiting deliberately any of these, is to discover your own village, as it were, one that has not been pointed out to you. Find some old inhabitant, and induce him to tell you any old stories of the place. At Tewin (Herts) there is an old woman, now over eighty, who talks freely of her lurid past, involving poaching, shooting a policeman, imprisonment, and leading the neighbourhood like a Deborah. She probably has her counterpart in every remote village.

Children will like to see a place where they can imagine that the "Sleeping Beauty" spent her hundred



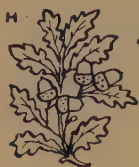
years. Little Berkhamsted is in the midst of the lovely lanes of Hertfordshire; fine stretches of distance seen between gaps in the trees give a feeling of remoteness; a very old house is still standing where Bishop Ken was born (one of the "Seven Bishops"). Now, in this village there is a mystery tower, girt about with trees, as though to keep away every prying eye, and positively asking for a fairy prince to break through with a hatchet. The following explanation must be kept from a child. It is just a tower, on very strong foundations, with 150 steps in a circular staircase. The roof is of lead, and the whole height up to the battlements is 120 feet. The Stratton family built it in 1789, as an observatory and a telescope was mounted on the roof. The Ordnance surveyors erect a crow's-nest on it, and are able to get into trigonometrical touch with St. Paul's Cathedral. All very prosaic.

## BOOKS

*The Cottages and Village Life of Rural England*, by P. H. Ditchfield (Dent).

*The Charm of the English Village*, by P. H. Ditchfield (Batsford). Good descriptions and excellent illustrations.





## CHAPTER XV

### PILGRIMAGES: ANCIENT AND MODERN

When that Aprille with his showres swoote  
The droughte of Marche hath perced to the roote,

Thanne longen folk to gon on pilgrimage.

WE can hardly realise how large a part was played by pilgrimage in early days. The motives put forth were chiefly these: to renew and vivify religious feeling by the sight of places where holy men had lived and died; to obtain relics for healing diseases; to secure credit both earthly and heavenly; to atone for some sin by a painful and dangerous journey. Underlying all these ostensible motives, there was doubtless that spirit of adventure, that boredom with a narrow home life, that love of new things, which Shakespeare calls the "one touch of nature that makes the whole world kin."

Jerusalem and Rome, the prime objectives, were too far away for most people, and holy places arose nearer home to meet the demand. Not that a special objective was always needed. In an Anglo-Saxon chronicle of the year 891, we find an account of three men who "came to King Alfred in a boat without any oars, from Ireland, whence they had stolen away, because they desired for the love of God to be in a state of pilgrimage, they recked not whither. The boat in which they came was made of two skins and

a half, and they took with them enough food for seven days, and then about the seventh day they came ashore in Cornwall, and soon afterwards went to King Alfred.”

Only a few of our holy places can be mentioned, but these shall be outstanding ones.

Of all English abbeys, *Glastonbury* was the most famous and the most hallowed. As early as 725, King Ina conferred upon it lands and privileges, and gave it the title “*Ecclesia Britanniae prima et fons et origo totius religionis.*” What more could be said? However, a great deal more was said. The foundation of the abbey was even ascribed to Christ. This was vague, but other legends were more definite. St. Joseph of Arimathea, with eleven companions, came here from the Holy Land, bringing the Holy Grail,<sup>1</sup> and a portion of the crown of thorns. This last he planted, and the famous Glastonbury thorn sprang from it. Among other sacred relics belonging to the abbey were: some of the gold offered by the magi; a piece of Moses’ rod; a splinter of the true cross; a fragment of a loaf used at the feeding of the five thousand; and some bones of St. John the Baptist, St. Peter, and St. Paul.

After such august relics, the tomb of King Arthur seems quite second-rate. The town is built on a peninsula formed by the river, and is familiar to readers of Arthurian legend as the Isle of Avalon. History throws a cold light on this “Arthur’s tomb.” Henry II. was a clever king; he had had much trouble with the Welsh, and when he heard the tradition that Arthur would come again, he determined to put an

<sup>1</sup> “Grail” is an old word for a dish. The Holy Grail was the sacred dish used at the Last Supper. The derivation of it from “Sang Real” (Holy Blood) is an intentional corruption.

end to this idea by searching for Arthur's remains. It need hardly be said that he succeeded, and an inscription was "found" on a cross:

Hic jacet sepultus  
Inclytus rex Arthurus  
In insula Avalonia.

But every Welshman is assured that "Unknown is the grave of Arthur."

Pilgrimage seems writ large over Glastonbury. The George Inn was specially the pilgrims' inn of ancient times. The carved panelling of the front, the window with a bay for every story, the curious old rooms, make an "altogether" that invites many a modern pilgrim. The abbot's kitchen was a separate building, and remains to show us what care was spent in the construction of this important adjunct; the plan is octagonal, within a square, and the roof is vaulted on eight stone ribs.

The actual old thorn ascribed to St. Joseph's planting was unfortunately destroyed by Puritan hands, but there are several thorns that have been planted from it. It is better not to think what English Puritans have done, but Glastonbury's sanctity and legends have stood the storm of even Puritan reformation, and no town will take you more thoroughly into mediaeval atmosphere.

The supernatural sanctity of Glastonbury and the number of its relics challenged comparison with Rome itself, and the town was called "Roma Secunda." The Pope himself set his seal on the veneration of Glastonbury, and continental pilgrims were drawn to it. The stoniest-hearted sceptic would not be unmoved on such a spot. The annual festival of opera, and Franciscan plays, is held in the summer, in the old hall,

or in the outbuildings of the abbey; so this is the best time to choose for a visit. The nursery rhyme, *Little Jack Horner*, has its origin in a curious story of Glastonbury. When King Henry VIII. was doing away with the monasteries, the Abbot of Glastonbury sought to bribe him into sparing Glastonbury by giving him the title deeds of the neighbouring manors. These were presented to him dished up in a pie. Sir John Horner was deputed to carry the pie, and as he carried it he put in his thumb and pulled out the plum of Mells, the richest estate in the pie, and this estate has been in the family of the Horners ever since. This story is firmly denied by them, however.

*Canterbury* has two distinct claims to sanctity. First of all, it is the cradle of Saxon Christianity. Ever since the mission of St. Augustine it has been the centre of the English Church, and the Archbishop of Canterbury is the Primate of All England. (Notice that the Archbishop of York is only the Primate of England.)

But these facts are secondary, from a pilgrim's point of view, to the martyrdom of Thomas à Becket. Every school-child knows how he was murdered in the cathedral, in response to a petulant remark of Henry II. to his knights. It is said that this act of sacrilege thrilled all Christendom, almost as much as the preaching of the First Crusade. St. Thomas immediately became the object of widespread veneration. Henry did penance at his tomb, and thousands of pilgrims flocked to find cures from his relics. The Black Prince gave thanks at his shrine after Poitiers, and was buried close by.<sup>1</sup>

For centuries the Pilgrims' Way on the southern slope of the North Downs became a kind of English

<sup>1</sup> See page 29.

Holy Land. There is dispute as to the actual route they took, but the old road is worth a pilgrimage in itself, embowered as it is by beech and oak and wild cherry, undergrowth and hedgerow.

With a preliminary meal at the Tabard Inn, in Southwark, and with Chaucer's *Prologue* in your pocket, you can feel something of what the pilgrims experienced. They were the great transmitters of news; the guest-house of a monastery was a kind of central news-agency of the time, as well as a club and an inn. Not only news in the strict sense, but gossip of the countryside, travellers' tales, stories and songs—all were given in return for hospitality. The word "canter" comes from the movement of the horse of a pilgrim.

Abuse of a once honoured undertaking crept in; stories were exaggerated and invented; a "Canterbury Tale" came to be proverbial in Kent for a falsehood; and there was probably much idleness and ribaldry, so that to be known as a "pilgrim" was almost a certificate of bad character. So Henry VIII. met with little opposition when he demolished the relics and erased St. Thomas's name from the Church Calendar. But it should be remembered that most churches dedicated to St. Thomas in England (and the big hospital) were intended for St. Thomas of Canterbury, not the apostle. Many were changed to meet the new views; but some (e.g. the church of St. Thomas at Lewes) remained loyal to Thomas à Becket.

Two other holy places may be named, more tempting to the adventurous than either Glastonbury or Canterbury. It is only enthusiastic pilgrims who reach *St. David's* and *Bardsey* (Bards' Island). These two are at the horns of Cardigan Bay. The Pope

(Calixtus II.) ordained that two pilgrimages to St. David's equalled one to Rome, and three equalled one to Jerusalem. Small stretches of road near the cathedral are still called Pilgrims' Roads. At Abercowin, in Carmarthenshire, are five pilgrims' graves, said to be those of five wanderers to St. David's, who died of starvation on the way. Royal visitors to St. David's included William the Conqueror, Henry II., Edward I. and his Queen Eleanor.

Bardsey's lone cliff can be seen from the Welsh mainland, at the northern horn of Cardigan Bay. Here were supposed to be the graves of twenty thousand saints. Pilgrims pressed across the dangerous stretch of water to the Sacred Isle, the "Road to Heaven," the "Gate of Paradise." So remote is Bardsey that it had a "king" and laws of its own until quite recent times.

*Wells* have been sacred since the earliest dawn of human records. Water healed, either by merely cleansing or by medicinal properties. The worship paid to heathen deities of wells was transferred to Christian saints, and the ancient cures continued. Holywell, in North Wales, attracted pilgrims from all quarters, and it is a curious fact that the only road through Wales from north to south started at Holywell and ended at St. David's.

In several country places in Derbyshire, but more notably at Buxton, there is a survival of prehistoric customs, in the yearly dressing and blessing of the wells. The ceremonies are held in June, when a local craftsman dresses the well by making a picture (say, of Jesus at Jacob's well), in a mosaic of mosses and flower petals. Then the wells are blessed with a religious service, the clergymen being accompanied by a procession, with the mayor, town-clerk, and a

surpliced choir. A festival queen is chosen from the schoolgirls, and a pageant and dancing follow, the whole affair lasting for three days.

*"In Private Duty Bound."* These words occur in the "Bidding," referred to in chapter x.; the preacher prays for Church and State, all seminaries of sound learning and religious education, and then he adds a prayer for his own College or Inn, "as in private duty bound." Now, most of our visitors from distant parts of the Empire have some special hero, some founder or conqueror of their colony, some explorer, whose ancient home they feel in duty bound to see. A few of these may here be mentioned, in the hope that some reader may be stirred to a pious pilgrimage.

Canadians will like to see the really good statue of Wolfe, in the centre of his own little village of Westerham, in Kent. It is an awkward journey on the Southern Railway, but such drawbacks serve to remind us of the peas in the shoes of earlier pilgrims.

The happiest spot to pay homage to Clive is Shrewsbury, rather a long journey from London, but certainly more cheerful than a visit to the melancholy 45 Berkeley Square, where he committed suicide. A statue of him is well placed on the steps leading from Whitehall to St. James's Park. There is a beautiful portrait tablet to him in the Abbey, with nothing but the single word "Clive." Those who love him will certainly feel this to be the right thing, amid so many over-elaborated inscriptions.

Our American visitors will be pleased to see the statues to Abraham Lincoln and George Washington, one by the Abbey and one by the National Gallery. Lincoln is a striking figure, in which "every crease



in the clothes expresses the strength and ruggedness of the man." The figure of Washington is too small for its surroundings. The little mining village of Washington, in Durham County, shows an old house that belonged to the family, and is well worth a visit, if one happens to be so far north. But the usual sacred spot to be visited by Americans is Sulgrave Church, near Brackley (Northants), where there is a tablet to the memory of Lawrence Washington, an ancestor of George. Sulgrave Manor is the old family home, and is now preserved as a memorial.

Another champion of liberty is dear to all Americans. "I abhor two principles of religion, and pity them that own them; the first is obedience upon authority without conviction; and the other, destroying them that differ from me, for God's sake." This was written by William Penn, the Quaker, the first Governor of Pennsylvania. The name he himself chose was Sylvania, but "Penn" was added by King Charles II., and no protests or bribery on Penn's part could get it altered. The little Friends' Meeting-House is at Jordans (Bucks), and Penn lies buried in the ground adjoining it.

The Chantry-House (built in 1367) at Billericay (Essex), the residence of Christopher Marlin, one of the Pilgrim Fathers, where he and his companions met before starting in the *Mayflower*, has been bought for re-erection in America. A house thus torn from its surroundings loses more than half its association value. If only one American saw it in England, that would be more effective than if it were seen by a hundred elsewhere. Of course it is said that we have not troubled about it, and therefore shall not miss it. True, but it is not ourselves we are now considering

in this matter, but Americans, and surely they would prefer to keep it here, and have it protected as a pilgrim spot for their countrymen.

The village of Marton (Yorks) should attract Australians and New Zealanders specially, but also anyone who cares about our seafaring history. Here, near where the vast modern "iron" town of Middlesbrough is growing apace, James Cook was born. The church register shows the words:

"1728. Nov. 3. James Ye son of James Cook day labourer baptized."

The village school is called the Captain Cook Memorial School, and the children are from time to time in correspondence with children in the schools of the countries where Captain Cook landed. Five flags have been sent to them: a Union Jack and the Commonwealth flag from Australia; the Canadian, the New Zealand, and the Hawaiian flags.

More interesting is the curious little fishing village of Staithes, near Whitby, where Cook's soul was born, so to speak. He was apprenticed to a haberdasher there when he was thirteen, quarrelled with his master, and was taken on board a collier, soon to be made mate. I once tried to visit Staithes, but could not carve my way through the smell of fish. There is little wonder that Cook ran away from it, especially if apprenticed to a peevish haberdasher. In all this region of Yorkshire, Cook's Monument on Easby Moor is a landmark far and wide. If this is too far away, flowers must be placed at the foot of his statue in the Mall.

In the orchard of Crowndale Farm, on the Beer—Alston road, near Tavistock, in Devon, is a cottage, smothered in ivy and bramble, a receptacle for empty

tins and other rubbish. One well-defined room remains, and massive beams of the upper floor. Here was born, in 1540, Francis Drake, our first circumnavigator. It is hardly surprising that Americans buy and carry away our treasures, when we treat them so badly. Rudyard Kipling tries to claim Drake as a Sussex man, because his father left Tavistock for Rye, where he brought up his family in the hull of an old ship. But NO! Drake, he was a Devon man.

The eighteenth century seems to have touched bottom, in English political, social and religious life. But two clergymen of the Church of England did incalculable good in stirring up men's consciences and raising the standard in all directions. These were John and Charles Wesley. In May, 1738, the brothers experienced their "conversion," and the anniversary is still kept as "Wesley's Day." The thirty millions who take the name of "Wesleyans" are not confined to England; and many strangers may belong to the fraternity, and be glad to see how out-of-date are the animosities that once existed between Church people and Wesleyans. On the church of St. Botolph Without, Aldersgate, this inscription has been placed:

I.H.S.

This Tablet is erected to the Glory of God in commemoration of the Evangelical Conversion of the Rev. John Wesley, M.A., on May 24, 1738 (the site of the meeting-room of the Religious Society was probably 28 Aldersgate Street), and of the Rev. Charles Wesley, M.A., on May 21, 1738 (the site of the house is near St. Bartholomew's Hospital, Little Britain).

Erected by the International Methodist Historical Union, May 24, 1926.

Wesley's house, 47 City Road, was by the side of his famous chapel, and is now a museum of Wesley relics, being regarded as an international centre of historical interest. A beautiful tablet in Westminster Abbey is also worth visiting. It depicts Wesley preaching, with the words, "The whole world is my parish."

Unfortunately the architectural taste of England was at its worst during this religious revival, and this may partly account for the ugliness of many chapels to be found in otherwise blameless villages. Wales and Cornwall are dotted with them, for it was in these Celtic regions that the revivalists found most fruitful ground. In fact Cornwall shows a far more interesting reminder of Wesley than anything London can offer. Near Redruth is Gwennap Pit, round the deep sides of which the miners used to throng, while Wesley preached to them from the bottom. No stately cathedral can stir the emotions more than this great natural church, where thousands were awakened from mental and moral death to new hopes. In Cornwall there was no antagonism between Church and Chapel in early days; it was a common custom for people to go to church in the morning and chapel in the evening.

Most people, young and old, will feel a desire to pay a tribute to Nelson. There are the obvious things: a visit to Trafalgar Square on the anniversary of the battle, October 21st, when the column is decorated; a visit to the *Victory* in Portsmouth Harbour; a meal at the George at Portsmouth, where he spent his last night in England. Then there is his birthplace in Norfolk, Burnham Thorpe, where we must remind ourselves that he was such a weakly child that there was little hope of rearing him. The High School at Norwich

has a statue to him. He attended a second school at North Walsham, one of the yachting centres of the Norfolk Broads, where a brick is preserved with the initials H. N. scratched on it. During the first years of the nineteenth century, Nelson made a tour of Wales and Central England, and each town in turn laid itself out to welcome him. I have a friend who as a child knew an old lady who had seen Nelson walking down Church Street in Warwick, with Lady Hamilton on his arm. This sounds a ridiculous trifle, but it shows how much Nelson means to English people that such a memory should be cherished and handed down. We have seen (chapter ix.) how Nelson is represented in the Abbey. His tomb and monument are in St. Paul's. Perhaps the most interesting place of all for honouring him is Chatham. This town has many good points about it, but the most optimistic would not describe it as cheerful. The delicate little Horatio, aged twelve, was to go to sea. His father took him from home as far as London, and then put him in the stage-coach to go to Chatham by himself. Dumped down in the street, he wandered about, too shy to ask where his ship (the *Raisonnable*) lay, desperately forlorn and miserable. No one was there to receive him when at last the ship was found. . . . Those of us who have ever been homesick, or have ever been alone and friendless in Chatham, will know something of what he felt. Compare this first going to sea with his leaving England for the last time, when thousands gathered at Portsmouth to wish him God-speed. "They pressed forward to obtain sight of his face. Many were in tears, and many knelt down before him and blest him as he passed."

There are relics of Nelson at Greenwich, and his

last dispatches are in the Museum of the Record Office (see chapter ix.).

Probably none but children feel in duty bound to pay any homage to kings and queens as such. But for their sake a few pilgrimages may be suggested, if only to increase their confidence in their history textbooks. All of them will like to see the place where Canute sat when he forbade the sea to cover his feet. This was at Bosham (West Sussex). His daughter lies buried in the church, and the Danish raven on a tile marks the floor over her grave. The church is very ancient, part of it is Saxon, and it is represented on the Bayeux Tapestry.

Another of our very early kings, Edward the Martyr, was killed at the gate of Corfe Castle, in Dorset. All school children have heard how the wicked Elfrida stabbed him while he raised the bowl to his lips to drink (979). There were stirring times at this castle, too, during the Civil War, for Lady Bankes held it against the Roundheads. However, as might be expected, it was "sighted" by Cromwell (see chapter xviii.). A Roman coffin of a child was found in the grounds here.

Another king, very disreputable, but consequently very popular with children, is remembered every year on June 15th. There is a little commemoration ceremony on Magna Carta Island, at Runnymede, near Windsor. Children may be a bit weak about Clauses 8 and 9 of the charter, but never forget that John rolled on the floor and chewed straw with rage, as soon as he had signed it. A good plan to whet the appetite, before going to Runnymede, or even before going to the British Museum to see the charter itself, is to look at Corfe Castle again, where John starved twenty-two

noblemen to death in 1202. At Greywell (Hants) there is a field known as the "King's Yield," the supposed spot where John yielded to the barons before going to Runnymede. Those who desire to pay further respect to this king may go to Newark, where he died of a surfeit of peaches and new ale, "after losing all his things in the Wash."

An interesting group of our sovereigns (the boy king Edward VI. and his two sisters) may inspire a visit to Ashridge Hall (on the borders of Bucks and Herts) bringing memories of all three. Here was a thirteenth-century monastery, which was given, at the "Dissolution," by the young King Edward as a present to his sister Elizabeth. And here the young princess lived, on into Mary's reign. Now in the hall there is still preserved a very touching relic: a set of baby-linen, including a pair of baby-shoes, night-cap, jacket, and tiny shirt, made as a present from Princess Elizabeth to her sister Mary, "who was thoughte to be with childe." The little things were never given or needed, and very soon Elizabeth was made a prisoner by that unhappy sister. On what a slender thread the future of England hung . . . if the little clothes had been needed, what a strange turn events would have taken!

Two of our kings have been imprisoned by their own subjects, and the castles in which they were kept are still in good preservation. Henry III. was imprisoned by Simon de Montfort in Lewes Castle, after the battle in 1264. Charles I. was imprisoned in Carisbrooke Castle, in the Isle of Wight.

To close with a pilgrimage for very little children. They should be taken to Banbury in Oxfordshire. They can see the market cross still, and good fortune

may send a fine lady on a white horse. In any case they will be able to test the famous "Banbury cakes," first baked in 1608.

## BOOKS

*Y Cymmrodor*, vol. xxiii. (46 Chancery Lane, W.C.).

Full account of ancient pilgrimages, with illustrations. By Hartwell Jones.

*The Boy through the Ages*, by D. Stewart. (Harrap).

*Forty London Statues and Public Monuments*, by Tancred Borenius (Methuen).







## CHAPTER XVI

### SOME LITERARY PILGRIMAGES

“STRATFORD,” writes Mr. Bernard Shaw, “at one end of the Cotswolds, and Glastonbury at the other, are the most fascinating places of pilgrimage in England, and the most lovably English.” But difficult to find is a region of England that has no connexion with any well-known author. Some are even spoken of as “the Hardy country,” “the Arnold Bennett district,” “Kipling’s county,” and so on. Space forbids mention of any but some outstanding places that are not only famous now, but always will be, however fashion and taste may change. It so chanced that these places are all delightful in themselves, apart from their literary associations, so that a pilgrimage in devotion to your favourite author ought to be a fruitful excursion in many ways.

Frequently the attraction is rather to the scenes depicted by the author, than to the home of the author himself. At Stratford-on-Avon we feel moved at the sight of the room where Shakespeare was born,

with its hundreds of pilgrims' names cut on walls and windows, and the school he attended; but we enjoy still more the countryside of Warwickshire, where Jacques moralised and Puck plied his mischief, however carefully the scenes were labelled "near Athens" or "in France." In short, Stratford without any guidebook but the plays—there is your Shakespeare pilgrimage. To Dover we all surely come, as inevitably as to Charing Cross; so be sure to look at Shakespeare's Cliff (with *Lear* in your pocket). If you are all for placing laurels, there are statues of him in the Abbey, in Park Lane, in Leicester Square.

For Milton, you may seek St. Giles's, Cripplegate, where he is buried. More cheerful is Christ's College, Cambridge, with his mulberry-tree still bearing fruit, and the beautiful gardens of the college, where he must have walked. But for getting at the heart of the poet there is nothing like a visit to Chalfont St. Giles, a calm sleepy village in Buckinghamshire, rich in memories of old English life and *L'Allegro*. Here is Milton's cottage, and if you can say that you have read *Paradise Lost* right through, you will be shown the actual room in which he dictated it to his daughters. If you fail in this test, sixpence will produce a similar result. It is either a shock or a relief to you to know that they rebelled sullenly at their task. Use Milton as a good excuse for going to see Ludlow. In the castle *Comus* was performed in 1634. This ancient Roman, Saxon and Norman town has beautiful black-and-white timbered houses, of Tudor and Stuart times, as well as associations with Milton.

A cottage just outside Elstow (a fascinating old village close to Bedford) was the home of Bunyan.

Notice the village green, the moot-house, and above all the church with its separate tower—a very rare thing. The church windows depict scenes from the *Pilgrim's Progress*, and are pleasanter to look at than Bedford Jail, where the authorities of this same church kept this saintly dissenter for twelve years, in conditions that do not bear thinking about.



MILTON'S COTTAGE AT CHALFONT ST. GILES

It is the only house occupied by the poet which is still standing.

The part of England that gives its name to the Lake poets is such a lovely district that it has become a regular holiday resort, and the Inquiry Office of the L.M.S. at Euston will give full advice as to the best method of seeing it in a short time. For Wordsworth, less ambitious pilgrimages can be made to Tintern Abbey, on the Wye, or to Westminster Bridge at three a.m., or by sitting on an old grey stone in any quiet field-path. If the journey north be taken,

Ruskin can also be honoured. There is a monument to him on Friar's Crag, and there is his "literary tombstone" at Coniston. In short, the Lake District is full of natural, and literary, attractions.

Coleridge, although a Lake poet, was a Devon man. He got those first and all-important impressions of the world from the lovely Ottery St. Mary, of which his father was vicar. The name only means St. Mary by the River Otter, but what a happy way of putting it. The church is like a small model of Exeter Cathedral with a Glastonbury clock and a pair of transeptal towers. The town appears as Clavering St. Mary in *Pendennis*, so that you can make either Coleridge or Thackeray an excuse for a run down to Exeter from Paddington.

Francis Bacon's pilgrimage is best made where he feasted and worked and laughed, studying human nature by the way, than where he died a broken man—Gray's Inn, rather than Gorhambury.

The dining-hall of Gray's Inn is quite the best room in the world, and here Bacon "ate his dinners."

On Grand Day, during dinner, a loving-cup is handed round the hall, beginning at the Treasurer. Each member before drinking bows to the members, standing, and declares his toast, "To the pious, glorious, and immortal memory of Good Queen Bess."

Extract from *The Customs of Gray's Inn Hall*.

Portraits of Queen Elizabeth, Francis Bacon, Sir Nicholas Bacon, and Lord Burleigh, look down on the diners. Anthony Bacon was at one time staying with his brother Francis in his chambers at Gray's Inn, and received a letter from his mother at Gorhambury containing this sentence:

"Alas! what excess of Bucks at Gray's Inne and

to feast it so on the Sabbath. God forgeeve and have mercy upon England!"

Bacon's signature is preserved in the admission register of the Inn (exquisite writing). There is also an account in the Society's ledger of money laid out by Bacon on the gardens, for elms, birches, cherry-trees, eglantine, roses, violets and primroses. The old catalpa-tree in the grounds is said to have been grown by him from a slip brought to him by Raleigh from the West Indies. In the courtyard there is a fine modern statue of Bacon, with a full inscription of his offices and literary work. At St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Square, is a tablet to commemorate Francis Bacon's baptism. It is "somewhere in the crypt," but no one seems to trouble about it, for St. Martin to-day is busy at his old custom of sharing his cloak with the naked.

Those who love Bacon as he should be loved will go to Gorhambury, a fair walk or drive from St. Albans, down a very narrow lane, and then across an open field, where thistles are growing and sheep are browsing. Here they will find the ancient home of Bacon, dropping to pieces under their eyes, the stones and bricks all pushed about by trees, seeming to say, "Do give me a hand." Then the pilgrims will complete their duty by going to St. Michael's Church in St. Albans, and looking at the extraordinary statue of Bacon, done by someone who surely understood him. Instead of the powerful and lively figure in Gray's Inn, it is the man of science and philosophy seated in meditative attitude, with his head flung back and away, either in contemplation of something unseen by men, or in deep disgust with his fellows. Thus from birth to death he is an enigma. (There

is a similar statue in Trinity College Chapel, Cambridge.)

Many will like to see the churchyard "where heaves the turf in many a mould'ring heap," the neglected spot where some village Hampden or inglorious Milton may rest. This is Stoke Poges in Buckinghamshire. Recently a man came thousands of miles in order to be married in this sacred spot. A curious fact about the opening line of the famous *Elegy* is worth noting: Gray originally wrote it thus:

The Curfew tolls, the knell of parting day.

The printer left out the comma by mistake, and Gray, approving the alteration, left it. But most will agree that his first way was by far the better.

To reach Stoke Poges, take the G.W.R. to Slough, a short run from Paddington, whence it is an easy walk. Not far on is Great Marlow, where Shelley's house may be seen.

After hobnobbing with the spirit of Dr. Johnson in the Cheshire Cheese (see chapter xi.), you will find his house, 17 Gough Square, quite close. It is preserved for the public, free of charge, so that you can actually see the attic where the Dictionary was compiled. Further investigation of Dr. Johnson can be made at Lichfield (a "county" to itself in the Midlands). In this cathedral city he was born: he attended its grammar school, as also did Addison and Garrick. Perhaps the profound melancholy that beset Johnson all his life is a reflection of the name of his native city: Lichfield means "field of corpses," because of the traditional martyrdom of a thousand Christians here in the reign of Diocletian. For the word "lich," meaning a corpse, compare "lychgate" (chapter xiv.).

The memorial to Sir Isaac Newton in Westminster Abbey is interesting but rather over-elaborated. A very much more inspiring statue of him is in the Chapel of Trinity College, Cambridge.

Chawton Vicarage, the home of Jane Austen, near Winchester, has not been treated with due respect. Perhaps if more people go to see it some effort will be made to preserve it suitably. Of course Jane is caviare to the general, and this will account for the verger at Winchester Cathedral asking a visitor, who desired to see her grave, "whether there was anything particular about that body, because so many people wanted to know where she was buried."

But most readers will want to find the exact spot on the Cobb, at Lyme in Dorset, where Louisa jumped, and thereby changed the current of life for all the characters in *Persuasion*. Or they will want to wander along Milsom Street in Bath, or see the view from Boxhill that failed to cheer the unhappy Emma.

Knutsford (Canute's Ford), in Cheshire, is an ancient and interesting town. An excuse for a visit there is the received idea that it is the original of "Cranford."

If you chance to be in London on 7 February, you can join the annual pilgrimage to Dickens's tomb in Westminster Abbey on his birthday. In Dickens's house (48 Doughty Street) there is a fine collection of his works in various editions, and some thousands of books bearing on them and their author; this is open from eleven to five every day.

A very good study of London could be made by visiting the places treated in Dickens's books. Start with a visit to Doughty Street and make notes of what can be seen, and then pursue them one by one. Refresh yourself at one of his inns, or at the Dickens

Restaurant, near St. James's Park Station, which is decorated in old-time fashion with numerous illustrations from the novels. The Old Curiosity Shop is behind the Stoll Picture House, in Kingsway. Fleet Street was as favourite a haunt of Dickens as it was of Dr. Johnson. Notice specially the Bolt-in-tun, near Bouverie Street, the last inn to run a stage-coach out of London. In its window is exhibited a coaching time-table (of 1838) with the name Pickwick on it. We have been told how Dickens used to scan the names over shops and note any that would suit his characters; so that here we seem to see the very birthplace of Mr. Pickwick. Mr. Kent's *With Pickwick in the Borough* (a sixpenny book for the waistcoat pocket) will prove a very helpful companion in any of these wanderings.

As yet no house has been devoted to a collection of objects of interest about Thackeray. The best place to visit is a house in which he lived, which he loved, and where he wrote *Vanity Fair*, *Pendennis* and *Esmond*. This is still a private residence—16 Young Street, near Kensington Church. He liked the two semi-tower-like embrasures, that gave it the air of a feudal castle. Over the window of the room that was his study is a tablet with the initials W. M. T. in a monogram, placed between the dates 1846–1853. Thackeray is buried in Kensal Green Cemetery, where are also the graves of Sydney Smith, Leigh Hunt, Tom Hood, and Anthony Trollope.

Whether you admire Carlyle or not, you are sure to find yourself in Chelsea for some reason or other. There are the Pensioners, the Flower Show, the buns, artists' houses, shops of antiques and strange crockery, a place where you can be psycho-analysed, a famous



old church (see chapter x.), Cheyne Walk, where "The Sage" used to stroll, his statue and his house, the Six Bells Inn in King's Road where the long-haired artists congregate.

To many, the most interesting thing to make for in Chelsea is none of these, but No. 119 Cheyne Walk, where Turner, the greatest English painter, spent the last years of his life. He could not bear anyone to know where he lived. Some friends tried to find out one night by listening to the order he gave to the cab-driver. But Turner was too clever for them; he said, "Drive to Piccadilly Circus, and then I will tell you again." He even adopted the name of his old landlady, and was known about Chelsea as "Admiral Booth." In this little house, although he was very rich and had many friends, he died, in December 1851, calling out as he was dying for "More sun, more sun."

The West Riding of Yorkshire breathes the very atmosphere of the Brontës' novels, so that a visit anywhere here is satisfying enough. But there is a sixteenth-century house near Birstal, called Oakwell Hall, which is taken to be the Fieldhead of *Shirley*. It has panelling and a minstrel gallery, making it worth a visit, apart from its connexion with Charlotte. The village of Haworth, near Keighley, has the parsonage where Charlotte and her sisters were brought up, and they are buried in Haworth Church.

Meditations on Izaak Walton are best made, not in Stafford, his birthplace (although the fine old Elizabethan house in Greengate is good to look at, if not quite certainly the site of his birth), nor in Winchester Cathedral (although his statue on the great screen is exceedingly pleasing), but rather along the

rivers where he fished, and the villages where he gossiped and refreshed himself.

Since 1653, when *The Compleat Angler* was first published, there have been some hundred editions. It would be well to buy an illustrated edition, such as that edited by Richard le Gallienne and decorated with drawings and head-pieces by E. H. New. These will awaken a desire for many a walk, from point to point, at an easy distance from London. If choice must be made, Waltham Cross gives you one of the real "Eleanor" crosses, built in 1294, and the Four Swans Inn, of the same century, with its famous sign stretching across the street. Not far from the Cross is Waltham Abbey, founded by the standard-bearer of King Canute, and holding the grave of King Harold. It is surprisingly beautiful inside, with the massive effects of Durham Cathedral put into a small space. Harold's Bridge is also at Waltham Cross.

Ware is a brewing centre, and is richly endowed with public-houses and inns of every description. "The Great Bed of Ware," mentioned in *Twelfth Night*, said to have been made in 1463, is to be seen at the Rye House Inn.

Children do not care about Izaak Walton, but the Bell at Edmonton and the town of Ware will please all who love the story of John Gilpin. A good pilgrimage would be to follow out Gilpin's entire ride from Cheapside to Ware. This could be done on the top of a bus (with some changes), and much interesting incidental matter would be thrown in.

Gilbert White, the eighteenth-century naturalist, is still so widely read, that the village of Selborne will attract some pilgrims. It is peculiarly satisfactory in this way, for the man, the book and the place are

all closely connected. Both the book and the village are always referred to as White's Selborne. He is one of the few well-known men to whom nothing ever happened. After being an Oxford don for a while, he returned to his birthplace, and lived a life very little removed from that of the creatures he so lovingly describes.

Keats, who ranks next to Shakespeare in English poetry, must be thought about at Hampstead. He was ill while at Hampstead, but his life was such a happy one that we need not take that into consideration. Edmonton, a less attractive suburb than Hampstead, keeps its interesting old Church Street, in which Keats lived with his grandmother when he was attending school at Enfield. It was an Edmonton surgeon to whom he was apprenticed at the age of fifteen. In Church Street, too, at the end of a little garden hemmed in by larger houses, is the cottage where Charles and Mary Lamb lived. They were both buried in the churchyard at Edmonton.

Llandudno is a much-frequented seaside resort in North Wales. Any children who are taken there, even if they do not go on purpose for this, must be told that "Lewis Carroll" wrote *Alice* while he was prowling on the Conway Shore sandhills. This will add new interest to the lines:

They wept like anything to see  
Such quantities of sand.

In the church of Our Saviour, Llandudno, there is a font in memory of Lewis Carroll.

## BOOKS

Any of the "County" Series mentioned in chapter iv. refer to the literary men of each county.

*Lorna Doone* is the guide-book to take on a visit to Exmoor.

*Northanger Abbey*, for Bath.

*Under the Greenwood Tree*, and others of Hardy's, for Dorset.

*Things seen in the English Lakes*, by W. P. Palmer (Seeley, Service).

*With Charles Dickens in the Borough* (Homeland Association). 6d.





## CHAPTER XVII

### ROADS

THE Romans stayed here some four hundred years. Ordinary people know little about their work here, but no one ever forgets the fact that they made splendid roads. That was nearly two thousand years ago, and yet to-day, in some parts of our civilised little island, the country roads are so bad that a farmer using a cart in Lincolnshire may have to alter the axle if he goes into Yorkshire, in order to fit the ruts. The Romans constructed roads chiefly for military reasons, strong enough to bear the heavy march of a legion, but also to promote intercourse and trade between villages and towns. Portions of these roads can be detected in various parts of the country; the names Watling Street, Ermine Street and Foss Way are the most familiar. They were not always as straight as is popularly supposed, but the Foss Way is remarkably so. In its run of two hundred miles from Lincoln to Axminster it never deviates more than six miles from the straight course.

The main Roman roads follow in a curious way

the same path as our main lines of railway. Thus Watling Street answers to our Southern and L.M.S lines from Dover through London and St. Albans on to Chester. (Full details of this are given in *The Roman Era in Britain*, by John Ward. Methuen.) Lincoln is a fine centre for a study in this matter, as Ermine Street and the Foss Way are both to be seen there, and there is the famous Foss Dyke, of Roman origin, regarded as the earliest canal in the country.

The Icknield Way is often spoken of as an old Roman road, but this is a mistake. It was doubtless used by the Romans, but it is evidently much older, and is probably the oldest road in Britain. It can be traced from the Wash to South Devon, along the chalk and on the ridges of hills, and often over unenclosed downs in Berkshire and Wiltshire. Sometimes it is used as a local road, sometimes as a green track or bridle-path. The Britons probably used it as a means of connecting the mining districts of the west with the agricultural region of the east.

In Saxon times the roads were neglected. The villages were isolated and practically self-supporting, and the fairs were few and far between. But in the Middle Ages the upkeep of the roads improved, because it was counted as a pious act to repair them, like the making of bridges (see chapter xix.). It was not till later that either religious fervour became slacker or the task became too great. It was possible to lose your way even on high-roads, and floods might bar the way for days. Another danger, too, increased with the increase of traffic. Edward I. ordered that the edge of the highway should be cleared two hundred feet each side, so that no coppice or brushwood, hollow or ditch, should serve as shelter for robbers.

The worst condition of our roads was reached at the end of the seventeenth century. Each parish was responsible for the upkeep of its roads, and it can easily be imagined that the peasants could not cope with the work when heavy business traffic increased, and the great lumbering stage-coaches became the usual means of travel. In fact the peasants lost heart and neglected the roads. Consequently Parliament stepped in with a very sensible remedy: a small charge was made, at various toll-bars, from each passer-by, and the money was devoted to the repair of the roads. Great indignation was aroused by this measure. "Unjust and absurd taxation to which men are accustomed is often borne far more willingly than the most reasonable impost which is new. It was not till many toll-bars had been violently pulled down, till the troops had in many districts been forced to act against the people, and till much blood had been shed, that a good system was introduced. By slow degrees reason triumphed over prejudice; and our island is now crossed in every direction by near thirty thousand miles of turnpike road" (Macaulay's *History of England*, chapter iii.).

Then a century later came railways, and if you look at an exhaustive map of these (for instance, the one in Bradshaw), there seems no room for anything else. Now we are arriving at another phase. Motor-cars are used so extensively, by all classes of people, over such long distances, and for so many different purposes, that roads, their condition and upkeep, are again a national concern. Great arterial roads are being made for endurance of heavy traffic, for swiftness and for safety. A system of labelling the chief roads A, B, C, etc., according to their efficiency, and

numbering them, makes the planning out of a journey much simpler than it used to be. For instance, if you propose to motor from London to Birmingham, or from Lincoln to Bath, you consult a road map, and make a note of the special number of the A road that runs between them. For smaller towns and villages it may have to be a B or a C road. Then all you have to do is to follow this number, which is clearly marked on the sign-posts. All this makes it harder to be lost, and takes from the romance of travel, but its convenience cannot be denied. And in objecting to it we are showing the same cantankerous spirit that attacked the now outdated toll-bars.

You may still find some of these old toll-bars, and in passing several bridges you still have to pay. But the upkeep of the roads is no longer dependent on tolls, it has been relegated to the rates, a kind of reversion to the old system. The increase in road transport, the linking up of remote villages, the chars-à-bancs and buses, for pleasure as well as business—all this has necessitated the creation of a "Road Board," and "Road Fund," to deal with the whole matter. So that immediate changes are likely on this side of our English life.

The road in England belongs to the pedestrian. Drivers of vehicles are directly responsible if any injury is inflicted, and this makes English road traffic safer than that of any other country. The rule that you "Keep to the Left" reminds us of the days when a man needed his right arm to be free in case of possible attack. A led horse for obvious reasons keeps to the right. The rule of the road for pedestrians is in a very chaotic state at present; until recently the rule was to keep to the right, but some danger attends this, for a man may step into the roadway without



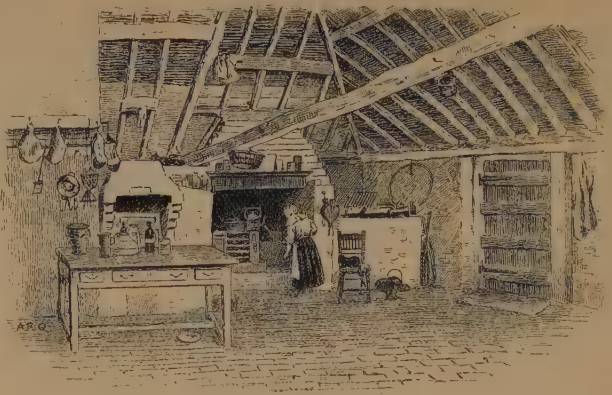
noticing the on-coming vehicles. Keep to the LEFT is the safest everywhere, but attempts to introduce the custom have hitherto failed with our conservatives; and it must be confessed that it is very confusing to emerge from a tube, where the left is commanded, to the streets where people insist on keeping to the right.

There has been a recent revival of coaching—not only motor chars-à-bancs, but a real old-fashioned coach, drawn by four horses. Any more exhilarating form of motion is hard to imagine, except, of course, the quite unparalleled joy of riding on horseback. The old Berkeley Coach is scheduled to run from London to Brighton every day throughout the summer. In May there is a very picturesque sight for lovers of Dickens and the coaching days—the Meet of the Four-in-Hand Club, in Hyde Park, under whose auspices the difficult art of driving a coach is kept alive.

It is amusing to note how the shape of a chair dominated our pleasure vehicles for centuries. Here is the pedigree: a chair, a sedan-chair on poles, a sedan-chair on wheels, a cabriolet, a hansom, a stage-coach and a chaise, a brougham, a railway “coach” (the name still persists), until the Pullman car and the corridor carriage broke the tradition. The bus, on the other hand, seems to have developed from the old goods wagon, giving us the wagonette, a very unpleasing affair, whether for comfort in sitting, sociability, or view of the scenery. The modern buses and chars-à-bancs have considered their riders, regardless of tradition, and have devised a very agreeable arrangement.

#### BOOK

*The Roman Era in Britain*, by John Ward (Methuen).



## CHAPTER XVIII

### HOMES, ANCIENT AND MODERN

AN Englishman has always been proverbially attached to his home, not so much owing to his affection for his family as to his dislike of interference from outsiders, and to his love of privacy and minding his own business. Artistic and scientific care have been lavished on the construction of our modern country villas, and their development can be traced back to the Middle Ages. It was not till the twelfth century that stone castles were built to any extent; and all the houses before this date, made of mud or wood, have naturally disappeared, leaving only certain relics and customs that enable us to conjecture how the early dwellings were constructed.

Two naturally-curved trunks of trees were placed some distance apart, just so as to allow their tops to meet and be fastened. A cross-beam strengthened them, forming the shape of the letter A. Some sixteen feet away a similar structure was planted, and then

the two were joined with further beams, the roof was thatched, and the walls filled in with whatever came to hand. If another portion or "bay" was added, it appears always to have been sixteen feet in measurement. Now this was the space required for a double yoke of oxen, the usual team for ploughing. In old deeds, houses are spoken of as having so many "bays," as a regular term of measurement. Just in the same way the "rod" was the space occupied by this yoke of oxen when ploughing abreast.

The size of the ox continued to influence the size of the house long after the time when a man and his family occupied the same quarters as his beasts. Far on into the Tudor period of stately manor-houses, the sixteen-foot bay persisted, merely as a building tradition. The ancient device of tree-trunks joined together may be seen in some old cottages still.

In old buildings that are fairly high, such as castles, churches and large barns, the old "putlog" holes may still be seen. The modern method of scaffolding was unknown, but when the masons reached five feet up, they left holes about eight inches square as they proceeded, and into these holes *logs* were *put*, and pushed through, projecting a few feet outside. Planks were then placed on these for the masons to stand on. The holes were filled up afterwards, but could be opened again if repairs were needed, after, say, a little brush with the enemy. At Corfe Castle (Dorset) the putlog holes are not filled in, so can be easily seen.

The "keep" of a Norman castle was the ordinary home (not a dungeon or prison), a strong square hall, where men and women, old and young, ate and slept and pursued their daily work. The lord

had a private apartment of a simple kind, called a "solar," and the kitchen was often a separate building (as at Glastonbury). But otherwise there was no privacy.

"It was an elementary state of things, and the story of domestic architecture is made up of the efforts to obtain greater privacy and more comfort. It was a long and gradual development. The hall remained



for centuries the centre and kernel of the house; but at one end of it the solar gradually swelled into suites of apartments for the family; at the other, the kitchen grew into the servants' wing, with scullery, larder, pantry, and many other subdivisions" (from *The Growth of the English House*, by Alfred Gotch. Batsford).

The custom of building with very thick walls, originally for protection, persisted long after the need had disappeared. My own old home in Cornwall has walls left that are over a yard and a half thick, and whenever a cupboard was required it was simply

gouged out. When some alterations were made a few years ago, a huge tree-trunk was discovered in one of the walls. In the Norman castles, separate rooms began as merely holes in the thick walls, something like the recesses in a railway tunnel. The fireplaces were merely stone slabs with a hole to the air for the smoke to escape, and a hood was sometimes added to ward the smoke from the room; and for a long time chimneys were so wide that a fugitive could lie hidden in one for days; and up to almost recent times small boys were employed to sweep the soot out. In the Cornish house just referred to there is such a stone fire-slab in the kitchen, and my mother remembered the bread being baked there by simply being placed in the hot wood ashes.

After the Wars of the Roses, when times were more settled under the firm rule of the Tudors, the castle showed its confidence by knocking down one wall, as it were. Then we get the three sides enclosing a courtyard. Naturally a porch would project from the centre, thus giving the shape of the letter E, and this was fancifully supposed to be a compliment to Queen Elizabeth. The Vyne, near Basingstoke, in Hampshire, is a fine Elizabethan manor-house of this kind, and one in which Elizabeth herself once stayed.

The tradition of the castle, as the sole country mansion of the landed gentry, prevailed long after the need for defence against enemies had given place to the need for comfort and pleasure, and the architectural forms and castellated towers remained. The moat was kept for adornment, but it was some time before broad mullioned windows replaced narrow slits. The tax on windows accounts for their very small

size long after one would have expected them to have been an eagerly-desired amenity. The old Clergy House in the High Street at Lewes (Sussex) is an example of loving care in a gable and in a window.

The deplorable taste of the eighteenth century "restored" ancient castles by trying to modernise and improve them, or on the other hand by admiring the "ruin," covered by ivy, grass and trees, all doing their deadly work on walls and foundations. Sometimes a cottage would be built in the enclosure itself. An old mansion in Kent was lately found to have twelve thicknesses of wall-paper, and when these were removed fine oak panelling was revealed; the plaster of the ceiling was then removed, and great oak beams were discovered. Eighteenth-century taste had covered these up as being ungenteel.

"Slighting" a castle was a very definite and purposeful act. In the time of Cromwell, for instance, a castle might be a dangerous centre of rebellion, and it might have to be slighted for political reasons. A hole blown in its wall, or some such act, would render it useless for war. Ruined castles, therefore, are plentiful, but a few have been preserved, and others have been restored so as to exhibit their ancient features as faithfully as possible.

Turning to the kitchen department of mediaeval times, it will be seen how its development led to those extraordinary underworlds in the town houses of the nineteenth century, with butler's pantry, parlourmaid's room, workrooms, cellars, sculleries, boot-rooms—and a rabbit warren of passages, areas, and back-doors. Now that the "servant problem" has arisen, all this elaboration is a mere nuisance. When servants were plentiful they made work for one another, and were

managed by a powerful housekeeper, who rustled about with a bunch of keys. But now that service in these conditions is disliked, and houses with a basement cannot be sold, there is a tendency to resort to a simpler life. There is a reaction against excessive use of carpets and curtains and needless furniture and ornament, with their demand on labour. Supply of fuel, light and water has been improved in such a way that far less carrying and cleaning are required. Very few families have a "washing day," not to mention a "baking day," but are served by laundries, bakers, window-cleaning companies, and a host of others with the slogan: "You pay the money, we do the rest." If there is a serious illness, we either have a hospital nurse in our home, or send our patient to a nursing-home. The tendency, therefore, is to build small houses, that can be worked with little or no domestic help, and to "convert" the inconvenient old houses into flats. Even the entertainment of our friends is done for us by hotels, if we can afford this luxury, and if not, friends who come to stay with us in our homes are expected to take us "as we are," and join in the simple household round. The whole system is far healthier and breezier than the old servant-ridden formalities.

The best way to study English domestic architecture is to make a note of any specimens of houses that seem to fall into distinct classes, and then arrange them roughly in order of date. For example cottages of different kinds, the new "council houses," an Elizabethan manor-house, a Georgian house in any of our London squares, a country "place," a suburban villa, and so on. Hatfield House is easy to reach from London, and has extraordinary interest in many different directions.

One has usually only to *ask* to be allowed to see any of these "stately homes of England."

But to make the study complete, one or two ancient castles ought to be included, and if possible those that protected widely different parts of the land, and those that have strong historic interest.

Quite accessible from London is Bodiam Castle, on the borders of Kent and Sussex. It is accessible in more senses than one, for it was given to the nation by Lord Curzon, who had spent great labour in studying its history, keeping it in careful preservation, and writing a book about it.

There were two main ways of protecting a castle from attack: one was to place it on a hill, giving it a terrifying aspect as well as a fine look-out against approach of enemies; and the other was to surround it by a moat. The Peak Castle, in Derbyshire, is a fine instance of the former, and Bodiam Castle of the latter.

Bodiam is not so much surrounded by a moat as by a lake, out of which it seems to rise like a magic palace, for it is built on an island just big enough to hold it. The first sight of it is so thrilling that it has been compared to the first sight of the Taj Mahal. The surrounding country, the lake, the water-lilies—so firm that the moorhens strut about on them as on dry land—the swans, the towers with their reflections, the great trees on the edge of the moat, all combine to give the dreamy effect of the Arthurian romances.

But by no means was it intended originally for poetic fancies, but as a strong defence against possible French attacks in the reign of Richard II., shortly after Wat Tyler's Rebellion, and it was attacked and



taken by Richard III. a hundred years later. The lake had to be crossed by a long bridge before the great gate was reached—a bridge that could be raked in all its length from battlement and tower and narrow loophole. Boiling pitch, in short, enters the picture. Lord Curzon discovered the well, the foundations of the bridge, the little harbour where boats used to come up the Rother with supplies, and the tilt-yard or jousting-field. He tried to turn this last into a village cricket ground, but found it impracticable to drain, owing to the dense growth of rushes.

Lord Curzon says, in his book on the castle: "At Bodiam not only does the watery cincture remain, but no trace of the modern world appears to invade the ancient and solitary beauty of the scene, and it could hardly surprise anyone, were a train of richly-clad knights, falcons on their wrists, and their ladies mounted on gaily caparisoned palfreys, suddenly to emerge from the Barbican Gate, for the enjoyment of the chase; or even were the flash of spear-heads and the clatter of iron-shod hoofs to indicate the exit of a party with more serious intent."

The castle can be reached by the Southern Railway to Robertsbridge. There is also a motor service between Hastings and the castle. A very pleasant way to approach it is by boat from Rye, along the River Rother. But this is what a correspondent in *The Times* says (30 August, 1926):

"Unless you have a motor-car, the best way to visit Bodiam is from Robertsbridge (or *Rotherbridge*, as it used to be), whence a daredevil little electric train—the Kent and East Sussex Railway—takes you rollicking along a line where the branches of the willows swish the carriage as it passes and the permanent way itself

is nearly as grassy as the green ride in a wood, with coltsfoot and toadflax and groundsel growing unabashed between the sleepers. For much of the way you run beside a little hidden watercourse, which is all a lovely tapestry of loosestrife and hemp agrimony, and along which, if you are lucky, a kingfisher will race the train. It must be the only railway in England where that can happen." (What the writer calls an "electric" train is really a couple of Ford vans stuck together and adapted somehow for railway use.)

At the other end of England, Bamborough is a great attraction, in spite of the long journey north. It was the seat of the Kings of Northumbria, and stood, as it were, with its feet in the North Sea, as a menace to the Danes. Standing on a rock 150 feet in height, going sheer down to the sea, it is only accessible on one side. In this case, therefore, no moat was needed, for the sea and the rock were defence enough. The banqueting-halls, galleries, dungeons, are all to be seen, and the very remoteness of the spot in far Northumbria makes a visit there an alluring adventure.

Away westwards, Conway Castle was built by Edward I., the Hammer of the Welsh as well as of the Scots. It is in an angle of the great wall of the town. The huge towers, and Llewelyn's Hall, are the chief features.

In the centre of England is Warwick Castle (see chapter xxii.).

At the other extreme of the land is Tintagel. This was Arthur's, and surely no other attraction is needed. Leave this castle till the last, or you may never see the others, for it is in Cornwall, an exceedingly difficult county to get away from.

BOOKS

*The Growth of the English House*, by J. A. Gotch (Batsford). Very useful for reference, with lists of great houses and castles, so that choice can be made. There is also a glossary of terms, and suggestions as to special features to observe.

*Bodiam Castle* (Cape) is expensive, but gives a full account of castle development.



MERMAID COURT, RYE



*Clopton Bridge from the Swan's Nest*

## CHAPTER XIX

### BRIDGES

NEXT to a sailing vessel a bridge is the most romantic thing ever devised by man. The least imaginative person can hardly fail to be moved in looking at a bridge that has been trodden for hundreds of years, and that has withstood all attacks of storm and flood. Like so much else, the building of bridges in ancient times was a religious act (witness the Roman title "Pontifex Maximus," generally supposed to mean "Bridge-maker" and the derived word "Pontiff"). In the Middle Ages all travellers were either pilgrims on a holy quest, or unfortunate wanderers needing help. A religious order, called Pontife Brothers, was founded in the twelfth century for the purpose of building bridges (the Pont d'Avignon was due to them). Chapels were frequently placed on bridges: the patron saint protected the bridge, and received offerings from travellers for its upkeep. Several of these chapels remain, but the finest is at Wakefield. Here, in 1460,

Richard of York was defeated and slain during the Wars of the Roses; and Edward IV. built this chapel in memory of his father.

At Lechlade, near the source of the Thames, St. John's Bridge is at the spot where four counties meet—Gloucester, Oxford, Wilts and Berks. Long ago a hospital was there with seven priests, to watch the bridge and care for the sick and needy.

An interesting record of a visit to England might consist in notes on some striking bridges, especially if the notebook were illustrated by rough sketches. Over the Thames, in London itself, a fair variety is offered. Waterloo Bridge is famous for its beauty, but has been condemned as unsafe, so that it may be demolished when these words are read. That would be a great pity. Waterloo—the very name is enough to stir the hearts of Englishmen, although many of them know nothing of the Belgian village, and probably imagine that the battle was fought on the site of the railway station. Those who are anxious to preserve the bridge speak of it as “the Cenotaph of 1817.” For it was a kind of national commemoration of those who had fallen in the Napoleonic Wars. It was built by John Rennie, and was opened in state on the second anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo, namely, 18 June, 1817. The Duke of Wellington rode across it at the ceremony. We have spoken elsewhere (chapter vii.) of its strange fascination for suicides, and of its connection with the building of the Old Vic (chapter xxxi.).

The first bridge over the Thames was a wooden one, where London Bridge now stands; at least, so tradition has it. The stone bridge was begun by King John, who admired the bridges in France, and it was finished in

1209. Timber houses, three stories high, with cellars in the thickness of the piers, and even with little gardens and arbours, were built on the bridge. A beautiful model of it in this state is shown at the London Museum. These houses were burned in the Great Fire of 1666, and were replaced by finer buildings, which seem to have remained until the beginning of the nineteenth century. Until the middle of the eighteenth century it was the only bridge in London. Its chapel was dedicated to St. Thomas of Canterbury (see chapter xv.). On the tower of the bridge the executioner used to fix the heads of decapitated criminals. No one can forget the story of Margaret Roper's devotion to her father, Sir Thomas More, and how she stole his head from the bridge.

At the north end of London Bridge is the church of St. Magnus the Martyr, whose life is obscure, but who is now identified with St. Magnus of Orkney. The church stands on a site held sacred for at least a thousand years, as the guardian of the gate of London, and must have witnessed some exciting scenes in our history. It was apropos of London bridges that a joke appeared in *The Times* of a hundred years ago, quoted from a periodical called *The Ass*: " 'How many kinds of bridges are there in the City of London?' asked a foreigner of a liveryman. 'Three: stone bridges, iron bridges, and wooden bridges,' was the reply. 'Have you not omitted Alderman Bridges?' 'No, I have not.'"

The Tower Bridge will probably amuse children, because it "works"; but it needs a few centuries of associations to make it respectable: at present it is only "fine."

Wool, in Dorset, has a very graceful bridge, close to a fine old manor-house.



Old London Bridge from St Dunstons Church 1756

At Croyland (or Crowland) in Lincolnshire, near Peterborough, there is a curious triangular bridge at the confluence of the Welland, the Nene and the Catwater drain. It dates from the time of Edward I. in its present condition, but a "triangular bridge" at Croyland is referred to in a charter of the year 943.

Pontypridd, which means "Bridge of Beauty," is in South Wales, and has a one-arch bridge of singular elegance over the River Taff.

Herefordshire has many beautiful bridges over the Rivers Wye, Lugg, Teme, and Arrow, several dating from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The finest is Wilton Bridge, over the Wye at Ross, consisting of six arches of red sandstone, built in 1599 when Shakespeare was doing his finest work. It was here that the famous philanthropist and lover of beauty lived, John Kyrle, Pope's "Man of Ross."

Stratford-on-Avon, everybody's Mecca, throws in as a mere trifle a magnificent fourteen-arched bridge, built in the time of Henry VII.

Over the Menai Straits, between Wales and Anglesey, there are two bridges of interest. The Suspension Bridge, carrying the road across the strait, is just a hundred years old. The Britannia Tubular Bridge was constructed by Robert Stephenson in 1850. It consists of two enormous tubular ways, made of wrought-iron plates, riveted together and resting on three piers, designed to resist high winds and to carry the two lines of the L.M.S. trains safely to Holyhead with the Irish mail. The mail anywhere in British territory is treated with something of the sanctity that hedges the king himself.

A beautiful bridge, five hundred years old, is at Abingdon (Berks). It was built in the year after the



Battle of Agincourt, and looks strong enough to last a few centuries more. But our modern fast and heavy traffic is a severe strain, so that it has been very wisely closed for this purpose. At one time a bridge priest was maintained to pray for the souls of the builders of Abingdon Bridge.

King Henry the fyft in his fourthe yere,  
He hath i-founde for his folke a bridge in Berkeschire,  
For cartis with cariage may goo and come clere,  
That many wynters afore were mareed in myre.

Farther north is a delightful old pack-horse bridge, at Haddon Hall, in the Peak District, and at Chester there is Gloucester Bridge, with a great single span, as well as the old seven-arched bridge.

At Ironbridge, thirteen miles south-east of Shrewsbury, is the first bridge to be built of iron (1779).

Cambridge has some beautiful bridges at the "backs" of the colleges, the most interesting being Queen's. This was constructed by Sir Isaac Newton in such a way that no nail was necessary. You will, however, see nails in it now. Some mathematicians were anxious to know how it had been made, and took it to pieces. But they could not put it together again—without nails. Both bridges of St. John's College are good, one of them, the Bridge of Sighs, rivalling its Venetian original in gracefulness. Clare Bridge is enriched with stone balls for ornament,<sup>1</sup> which no freshman can count. It dips slightly in the middle on account of the excessive dancing that took place there when Clare had a senior wrangler.

The Devil's Bridge near Aberystwyth is amid some of the loveliest scenery in North Wales. There are really three bridges, one above the other. The ancient

<sup>1</sup> See page 315.

one is ascribed to the Knights Hospitallers by some authorities, and by others to the Devil, who agreed to build a bridge if he might have the first living creature that crossed it. The woman to whom he made this rash promise sent over her dog first, and thus outwitted him.

A beautiful mediaeval bridge is at Potter Heigham, near Yarmouth, and farther north the bridges at Durham are exceedingly picturesque, while at Warkworth, in Northumberland, may be seen a very rare relic, a defensive tower on a bridge. In warlike days such towers were very common, for bridges were the scenes of many battles, and as much pains were occasionally spent in preventing people crossing the river as in helping them over.

Ludford Bridge, at Ludlow, joining Shropshire and Hereford, a very combative spot in old times, looks just like an ancient fortification.

A contrast to these menacing structures can be seen in the rustic footbridges in all parts of the country. A beautiful one is at Coughton in Herefordshire.

The River Conway is crossed at Llanrwst (Denbighshire) by a bridge built in 1636 by Inigo Jones. The saying is that it shakes if you bump it. The inhabitants of the little town should be looked at with interest, to see if their morals have risen in standard since the days of the famous sermon on the Judgment Day. It ran something like this: "The Lord will say, 'John.' But I shall not answer, for there are many Johns. Then the Lord will say, 'John Jones.' But I shall not answer, for there are many John Joneses. Then the Lord will say, 'John Jones of Llanrwst.' Still I shall not answer, for there are many John Joneses of Llanrwst. Then the Lord will say, 'John Jones, Vicar of Llanrwst.' And I shall say,

‘Here am I, Lord.’ Then He will say, ‘Where are thy sheep?’ And I shall say, ‘Nowhere, Lord, for my sheep are all goats.’”

A batch of beautiful bridges is to be found in Devon. Over the Dart is the seven-arched Staverton Bridge, built in 1412; and an equally old one, near Ashburton, is Holne Bridge, with three semicircular arches, and recesses for foot-passengers, very necessary in a bridge only ten feet wide when a *char-à-bancs* goes by. A still greater need for the recesses is at Plym Bridge, which is only eight feet wide, situated in one of the loveliest spots of Devon. Again, in the region where the famous Honiton lace is made, in a lane between Colyton and Northleigh, is a three-arched, recessed bridge over the Coly.

The Society for the Preservation of Ancient Bridges, 20 Buckingham Street, W.C., has issued a leaflet with illustrations of various bridges, which is forwarded to anyone who cares to write or call for it. This may whet the appetite for some special region. A delightful exploration of bridges might be made all along the Thames, from source to mouth, from the funny “Ha’penny Bridge” at Lechlade, to the Tower Bridge.

Some railway bridges are worth noting. The Royal Albert Bridge, which carries the Great Western trains from Devon into Cornwall, was the last and greatest of Isambard Brunel’s enterprises. The Prince Consort opened the bridge in 1859, but Brunel was too ill to be present, and died in the same year.

The undulating nature of the land in Cornwall has necessitated a large number of viaducts, as many as sixty between Newton Abbot and Penzance. These were originally made of wood, but have been replaced

by stone or steel. In old days it was always rather an adventure to go over one of these wooden viaducts, as it seemed doubtful whether the train would get across. A wooden one, designed by Brunel, may still be seen at Penryn, on the Falmouth branch.

There is a viaduct near Consett, built by the Stockton and Darlington Railway in 1859. This line is specially interesting to railway enthusiasts, as the first public railway was opened here, and the actual No. 1 engine of George Stephenson is on view at Darlington Station.

### BOOKS

*The Historic Thames*, by Hilaire Belloc (Dent).

*River Thames*, by F. V. Morley (Methuen). Clear, detailed maps of sections, with beautiful water-colour illustrations.

*English Wayfaring Life*, by J. J. Jusserand (Fisher Unwin).



THE FIFTEENTH-CENTURY BRIDGE AT ST. IVES (HUNTS.)

To the chapel in the centre the tower-like superstructure was added after 1689.



## CHAPTER XX

### SOME OF OUR OLDEST THINGS

EVERY county, almost every village, has some ancient monument or old custom that is of interest to the historical student. Until modern times religious awe and superstition induced people to leave untouched any monument, and to keep up any custom, long after the meaning of them had been forgotten. Recently there has been a tendency to revive old customs (such as the May-day festivities), and this is all to the good, but embellishments and additions are distracting and defeat historical research. We want to know how they actually did build and think in former times, not how they might or should have done.

To take, for instance, the White Horse cut in the chalk on Bratton Down, near Westbury in Wiltshire. Originally, no doubt, a very crude affair, it was "improved" into a respectable steed, one need hardly add in the eighteenth century. Like the other famous horse at Uffington, it is traditionally supposed to commemorate Alfred's victory over the Danes at Ethandune.

Better respect for ancient monuments is now very much the fashion, and there will be no tampering with the Cerne Giant in Dorset, the Long Man of Wilmington in Sussex, or the Cross at Bledlow in

Bucks. The Horse at Uffington (named after the Saxon King Uffa), in White Horse Vale (Berks), is peculiarly interesting because the shape of the horse suggests a greater antiquity than the time of Alfred. The Red Horse, near Edgehill, is supposed to be connected with the Wars of the Roses.

Beyond the "scouring," or weeding, that these monuments require every few years, they will be untouched, we hope, till the crack of doom.

The early chapters of *Tom Brown's School Days* (usually skipped by young readers) will be very helpful to any visitors to England on antiquity bent. They will want to see not only the White Horse, but the "Manger," the "Seven Barrows," and the "Blowing Stone." This last was "a square lump of stone, some three feet and a half high, perforated with two or three queer holes, like petrified antediluvian rat-holes, which lies there close under the oak. . . . 'Like to hear un, sir?' says mine host, and he applies his mouth to one of the rat-holes . . . sure enough a gruesome sound, between a moan and a roar, spreads itself away over the valley and up the hill-side and into the woods at the back of the house, a ghost-like, awful voice." Mine host goes on to explain that it was used as a warning of danger, perhaps of a Northmen's raid, perhaps earlier still. It is to be hoped that no American millionaire will buy it for a dinner-gong.<sup>1</sup>

Dotted about England are many queer stones of one kind or another. As usual with anything slightly out of the common, legends and folk-lore grow up around these stones. Occasionally a rock is found poised perilously on another, and the top one can be

<sup>1</sup>It is under a tree on the road from Kingston Lisle to Lambourn.

pushed to and fro—such as the Logan Rock, between Penzance and the Land's End. These rocks have been probably left like this by glacial movement. Others, again, show unmistakable evidence of man's work. Cromlechs, one stone placed on two or more others, are common throughout Cornwall. The most remarkable of all our stone circles is at Avebury (near Marlborough) in Wiltshire, but its significance has been destroyed by the growth of the village, and the use of the stones for building. Fortunately we have a splendid specimen left at Stonehenge, on Salisbury Plain. The Devil was long credited with having brought the stones from afar. Then they were ascribed to the Druids. But they appear to be rather connected with the worship of the sun than the oak. Inside the circle is the flat "altar" stone on which human sacrifices were offered, and a line from that to a stone placed outside points to the sunrise on the longest day. It is from this fact that the age of Stonehenge has been calculated. The sun does not rise at precisely the same moment each year, and the difference between the point at which it appeared when the stones were placed, and the point at which it appears now, gives the date as being 1680 years B.C.

Without doubt, stones themselves were worshipped, especially if found or placed by man in an upright position (such as the "Nine Maidens" at St. Columb in Cornwall). Sometimes a legend clings very closely, as in our famous coronation stone in Westminster Abbey, said to be the pillow on which Jacob rested.

London Stone, probably far older than the Romans, has already been mentioned (chapter vi.). It was used as a seat of justice, and is referred to in 2 *Henry VI.*, IV. vi. Superstitious awe led to the belief that on

certain nights in the year, menhirs (or long stones) turned into human beings and went down to the water to drink. This was said of the Rollright Stones, between Oxford and Stratford-on-Avon. Three of this circle are left—the King and the two whispering Knights.

If time forbids a journey to Cornwall, or even to Stonehenge, an easy trip is to take a train from Victoria to Chatham, and then a delightful bus ride to Maidstone. Lovely views of Kent regale the whole drive, and the old Pilgrims' Way is crossed. About three miles from Maidstone is the village of Aylesford, where a bridge with six stone arches crosses the Medway. Near by is a famous cromlech, called Kit's Coty House—at one time thought to mark the site where the Saxon Horsa was slain by the Britons, but now conjectured to be far, far older. Close by, again, is a monument that would amuse children, called the Countless Stones. They were once a circle, but have been broken in falling, so that it is very difficult to count them; and the local legend is that you never count them twice alike. The tale of the baker who placed a loaf on each, to assist the count, but was followed by the Devil lifting the loaves, is now discredited.

Some eight miles from Maidstone, at Trotterscliffe (pronounced locally "Trosly"), is the Coldrum Stone Circle, a kind of miniature Stonehenge. The stones are obviously shaped by man, but are said to be older than the familiar palæolithic or neolithic ones. This circle has been presented to the nation by a village grocer, a keen archæologist.

At Whetstone, on the Great North Road between Finchley and Barnet, is an old stone on the highway, on which it is said the soldiers of Warwick the King-maker whetted their swords before the Battle of



Barnet (in the Wars of the Roses). Probably it had some much more ancient significance.

Just beyond Barnet itself is the Highstone, erected on the spot where Warwick fell.

Close by is Hadley Church, one of the highest points between London and York, and on this church tower is the iron torch-holder (renewed) which was used for signalling at the time of the Armada scare. Talking of torches, a relic of old London pre-gas days may be seen in several of the residential squares. An iron extinguisher is placed at the gate of the house, for the use of the "link-boy," who escorted parties home with his torch.

Just outside Hadley Church there is a large stone by the wayside, used for mounting horses, a reminder of the days when a horse was still a common means of travel. Such a mounting-block, with two steps, is still to be seen in Palace Yard, near the entrance to Westminster Hall, and the empty stables behind it, where Members of Parliament used to put up their horses.

At Kingston in Surrey there is the ancient stone on which the Saxon Kings sat for their coronation.

By Westminster Abbey will be found a region called the "Sanctuary." There were certain ancient churches in England with the privilege of protecting criminals who took refuge in their precincts, and the Abbey was one of these. The sanctuary knocker at Durham is still in existence, and cannot be looked at without a feeling of pity for the thousand despairing hands that have worn it smooth by the final clutch of safety. It consists of a dragon's head, with a ring coming out of its mouth and serving as a knocker. The ring is an amphisbæna, or two-headed snake.

Over the doorway was a little room, where watchers were on the look-out, day and night, to admit fugitives. As soon as one arrived, the cathedral bell was tolled. The refugee was then clothed in a black robe, with the yellow cross of St. Cuthbert on the shoulder. He was detained till deliberate justice, instead of hot revenge, should reach him. There is a sanctuary knocker and ring also at the church in Stratford-on-Avon.

In several churches there used to be a stone seat for refugees near the altar, and one such sanctuary seat is still to be seen at Hexham (Northumberland). The sanctuary rights were not intended to interfere with the law, but to protect anyone from sudden vengeful violence, until a fair trial was possible. Later, this sanctuary right was abused and was finally abolished in 1697. "The precincts of the Abbey," says Dean Stanley, "were a vast cave of Adullam for all the distressed and discontented in the metropolis who desired, according to the phrase of the time, to take Westminster."

Some places, usually episcopal residences, and their enclosures, were exempt from taxes and ordinary civil jurisdiction; these were called "Liberties." Ely Place, Holborn, was such a liberty (as well as being a sanctuary). It was the palace of the Bishop of Ely, and dates back to the thirteenth century. The strawberry garden is mentioned in Shakespeare's *Henry VI*. Up till recent times, no police officer or sheriff could follow a fugitive or debtor who had taken sanctuary in this liberty, and Ely Place still has a local control of its own—lighting, watering, draining, policing, and so on.

Business was taking me the other day to Victoria

Station, and as I stood in Trafalgar Square looking for a bus, I noticed that Whitehall was strangely free from traffic, and that in the distance people were crowded. Some serious accident, thought I, and set out on foot. To my surprise, who should cross over from the "House" to the Horse Guards but King George, in a vast gilded carriage, drawn by eight horses with postilions. He had just opened Parliament, and this piece of ancient pageantry was displayed to me in all its glory, as I was casually walking to Victoria. So you never know what delights await you at any moment in England. I thought what a treat such a sight would be to our children in distant dominions, or remote parts of our own country.

Shropshire provides a relic that seems to take you back to primitive man. The "coracle," or little round boat, not much heavier than a big basket, is still in use on the Severn. The men show the greatest skill in navigating the little thing that has neither prow, stern nor rudder; and they carry it on their backs across the land.

There is one sight that you must on no account fail to attend to, if you get the chance, and it may come at any moment, in any street. This is a Punch-and-Judy show. A whole play is enacted on a stage some two feet wide, in a box raised from the ground, so as to allow a man to stand (hidden by drapery) to work the puppets. It is said to be a survival of the old miracle plays of mediaeval England. Punch was originally Pontius Pilate, and Judy is a corruption of Judas. The simple plot never fails to attract an audience, and you may hear indignant protests when Punch says he never hit Judy: "Oh, 'e did! I see 'im 'it 'er."

In the London Museum there is preserved a whole

set of Punch-and-Judy puppets of the date 1830, almost exactly the same as you may see in London to-day. May good luck give you this golden chance, for the Punch-and-Judy shows sent out to private houses by entertainers lack the historical flavour of the real thing in the street.

A custom so ancient that we must probably go back to the Phœnician Baal worship (we know the Phœnicians came to Cornwall) in order to trace its origin, is the pagan festival of greeting the spring. In various parts of Cornwall, particularly at Helston, on May 8th, there is held a yearly feast called the "Flora," corrupted into "Furry." *Everyone* in the town joins in the dance and song. The couples (often strangers to one another) dance into every house, in at the back and out at the front, and the whole neighbourhood is given up to revelry, sometimes of a none too reputable nature. The Furry is perhaps the oldest *living* thing to be found anywhere. It has not been revived, but has just gone on from days that make the Old Testament seem modern.

Folk-dancing and folk-singing formed the chief recreation of villagers in old days, and great pains are being made to revive it. The English Folk-Dance Society (founded by Cecil Sharp) has its headquarters at 107 Russell Street (near the British Museum). Three leading kinds of folk-dancing are thus distinguished: the *Morris*-dance, done by six men with bells on their legs, and handkerchiefs or sticks in their hands; the *Sword*-dance, done by a group of men wielding wooden swords—there are some old teams of these still active in the North of England, the miners of North Skelton and Winlanton, and the fishermen of Flamborough, being notably skilful; and the *Country*-dance.

The morris- and sword-dances are difficult, and the bulk of the villagers are spectators merely, but the country-dances are more social, and any number can take part. There are interesting traces of ancient ritual in them. For instance, in the Ring-dance, one figure is for certain of the dancers to step into the centre of the ring and place the palms of their hands together. Probably the early ritual was a dance round a tree, or stone, or other sacred object, and the palms were placed against it to obtain inspiration, or healing, or fruitfulness, from the god. Some of these dances were done on the top of a church tower, as a concession from the priest. In the same way, anthems are sung from the top of Magdalen Tower in Oxford on May Day.

At Bampton, near Oxford, there is morris-dancing every Whit Monday. That is genuinely an old custom, but revivals are starting in many places. The Oxford policemen recently performed a morris-dance in New College Gardens. In the winter there is an "All-England Festival" in the Great Hall of the London University. There is a Christmas Folk-Dance Ball, and in June there is an open-air dancing display in Hyde Park.

Children and adults in countless towns and villages are being taught these dances, which require intellect and dexterity. Some nuns in a convent were being recently taught the steps and movements by a visitor, and the whistle had to be blown again and again before they could be induced to leave off. I was waiting for my train in a country station in Yorkshire the other day and was delighted to watch a group of about a dozen young men and women passing away the half-hour by executing a folk-dance on the platform.

Maypole-dancing has unfortunately declined in

England, except where it has been revived by artistic people. For instance, the keeping of May Day and the choosing of a May queen were established as a regular yearly ceremony by Ruskin, at Whitelands College, Chelsea. Each May Day as many of the past May queens as possible assemble and robe themselves to do honour to the new queen, and a bishop, or any such dignitary who may be present, does homage to her with all the rest. Dancing, singing and revels then follow. Students of the college are spreading the custom in the schools where they teach, so that many a school now chooses its May queen, and dances round a Maypole.

St. Andrew's Undershaft, a London church built in the sixteenth century, was so called because it stood in the shadow of a Maypole.

Very little is made of the carnival by our Protestant people, but the eating of pancakes on Shrove Tuesday is fairly universal, and at Westminster School an old custom is kept up every year on that day. Boys chosen from each Form line up in a row. The cook, dressed in white, comes in with a pancake in a pan, in procession with the headmaster and other dignitaries. The cook then hurls forth the pancake, and the boys scramble for it. He who manages to get the largest piece receives a guinea. Visitors are admitted and there is generally a large number to witness the contest. The boys of Westminster keep up another curious relic in their costume, the stove-pipe or top-hat.

At St. Clement Dane's Church in the Strand there is held the annual children's service with the distribution of oranges and lemons on Lady Day (25 March). This custom is recorded in the game: "Oranges and Lemons, say the Bells of St. Clement's."

April Fools' Day is kept up only by children and frivolous-minded adults. A child is sent to buy dry water, fresh salt, strap oil, pigeon's milk, plaice without spots, and so on. The shopkeeper when asked for one of these articles gravely tells the child that he is out of stock at present, but Mr. So-and-so at another shop will be sure to have it. In these simple sallies of wit the victim generally enjoys the joke as much as the perpetrator.

St. Bartholomew the Great, Smithfield, is sure to be visited on many counts. But on Good Friday there is a specially interesting ceremony, when aged women of the parish pick up sixpences from a tomb-stone, and afterwards receive hot-cross-buns.

A custom dating from the thirteenth century is preserved in Essex. At the village of Dunmow (about forty miles north-east of London), a fitch of bacon is awarded annually to the married couple who can best prove amity, before a jury of six bachelors and six spinsters. The ceremony had fallen into disuse for about a hundred years, when it was revived in the middle of the nineteenth century.

In the summer at Rogation-tide (just before the Church festival of Ascension), an old custom may be seen in many parts of England, of which Oxford is one. Boys "beat the bounds," that is, they run along the boundary of the parish, and this sometimes involves going into houses, climbing over walls, and so forth. It evidently dates from a time when written records were difficult to make or keep, and therefore publicity had to be given to boundary lines. The word "beating" has a painful significance, and explains the presence of the boys. At all the important and possibly disputable points the boys were beaten, in order that their memories

might be impressed. The psychologists even in early days saw the connection between feeling and memory. Nowadays, only slight wands are used, and the *bounds* are beaten, not the boys, who receive pennies in place of the former blows. Sometimes, as at South-wark, the bounds have to be beaten in a boat.

Blandford Forum, in Dorset, has many points of interest. Its name suggests a market, and a Roman one at that; anyhow, it has been a market town at least since the thirteenth century. It is the "Shottsford Forum" of Hardy's novels. In the little town of Blandford, close by, a bell has been rung daily for over 800 years at one o'clock and at six in the evening. This is a survival of the days when clocks were very rare, and the peasants relied on the bell to arrange their work, meals and rest. The custom came near dying out a year or two ago, as a useless piece of labour, but a native of Blandford (Mr. Pond) living in Australia offered to meet the expense himself, so that the bell should be rung *in perpetuo*. In this connection it may be noted that the curfew bell is rung in Lincoln's Inn every night.

A good deal of antiquarian interest can be found in nursery rhymes and children's games. Nothing seems useless or absurd to children, and in their play they keep alive old sacred rites and superstitions, that a more enlightened religion would frown on if they were performed by adults. In August you may still find a group of children standing by a queer arrangement of flowers and oyster-shells, begging you to "Remember the grotto." In other words, they want you to give them some coppers. Now this appears to be a relic of the days of the cave men, whose temple consisted of a holy cave or grotto, at the door of which



the poor sought alms of the benevolent. It is usually, however, connected with St. James of Compostella, the patron saint of Spain, and the shells that the children spread out are relics of the cockle-shells of pilgrimage, that pilgrims who had been to Spain would show as a proof of their voyage and their sanctity, when they were begging for alms from the pious people who could not go themselves.

Almost as soon as November begins, there is a preparation for Christmas in the shops. Bazaars, displays of toys, and endless amusements for children are got up on an enormous scale by all the large shops, not only in London but throughout the country. November is a far from cheery month, and we do all we can to enliven it. Our festivities on the 5th are probably the remains of some extremely ancient fire-worship, at the oncoming of winter. But we call it Fawkes's Day, and commemorate the escape of King James I. and his Parliament from being blown up by gunpowder on 5 November, 1605. Little boys (notice again how the children have always kept alive the rites) dress up a figure of someone who is being popularly execrated at the time, and carry it round in the hope of receiving coppers from passers-by. But the evening is the time. Fireworks are sent up from every suburban villa that boasts a boy. Then, too, the figures of the popular villains are burned, and huge bonfires form centres for leaping over and dancing round. Obviously here we have a very ancient custom of human sacrifice and ritual dance; as times improved, straw figures were substituted for the living victims, and a terrible ritual has survived in the harmless and cheerful bonfire.

The Lord Mayor's Show is in a transition stage.

A few years ago the gilt carriage had begun to look foolish among modern cars, and the whole affair was becoming nearly a national joke. But owing to the recent energetic revival of all old customs, pageants and celebrations have become quite fashionable among the serious-minded. So that November 9th is likely to afford a bit of history for many years to come.

Since men have lived in communities there has always been a tendency for those who did the same work to associate with one another, for mutual assistance, combination against oppression, and social pleasures. In the Middle Ages every trade had its "Gild" (a word meaning money, for then, as now, the paying of a subscription was inevitable), consisting of all who belonged to the trade, in any capacity. Even bell-ringers had a gild. They were further bound to one another by religious services, as well as by charity to the sick, the bereaved, and the unlucky. Schools were founded by them, of which many are flourishing to-day. Yearly feasts and pageants were held, and plays performed, for which Chester, York and Coventry became specially famous. The Protestant Reformation, no doubt estimable in many ways, played havoc with some of our best things in England. Gilds were abolished as being superstitious, and of course the king became richer, for the funds were confiscated to the Crown. Gild halls gave place to poor-houses. It is hard to say whether this or the destruction of the monasteries was the darker deed. However, the gilds were not suppressed so effectively as were the monasteries, as our rich City companies are here to testify. Their magnificent halls in the City may not be easy to see any day, for the uninitiated, but some time when you are in Threadneedle Street, walk through

into the court behind No. 30, and see what the Merchant Taylors have in the way of a beautiful courtyard and fountain. Or, when walking up Ludgate Hill, squeeze along a tiny passage, about halfway up on the left, and see what a large court the Stationers have kept. When you reflect that land in the heart of the City is worth hundreds of pounds the square inch, you can hardly think the ancient gilds of London are quite poverty-stricken.

We must be thankful, therefore, that the London City companies remain and that the Lord Mayor's Show is kept up in the heart of the Empire.

There was nothing to take the place of the gilds during the years of dreadful *laissez-faire* that followed on the introduction of machinery, and now in modern days responsibility for the sick, the poor and the disabled has fallen on the State, never beloved by the Englishman. Trade Unions give benefits to their members, and fight the employers if wages are too low or hours too long, and in this way have delivered the workmen from neglect and oppression. But these have none of the big family idea of the old gilds, for they do not include both employers and workmen in the one organisation. The gild spirit seems to have been achieved in one case—the Stage Gild; here employers and employed, managers, artists and dramatists, are to be found under one roof and one administration.

The eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month is likely to be remembered by the English for many generations, as the day of the Armistice in 1918. Two minutes' silence is observed by all, and wreaths are placed at the Cenotaph in Whitehall, and on the Unknown Warrior's grave in

the Abbey. The Silence is only a few years old, and ought not to be enumerated among our oldest things. But it was not a manufactured affair. No one knows who started it. But it is so finely in keeping with the Englishman's inability to express himself in public, and is so adaptable to all our many shades of belief and opinion, that it may be regarded as a seal on the tolerance that has followed our past ages of strife. Already "The Silence" seems to be an *old* thing.

### BOOKS

*The Golden Bough*, by Sir James Frazer (abridged edition) (Macmillan).

*Salisbury Plain*, by Ella Noyes (Dent). Giving an illustrated account of its Stones, Cathedral City, Villages and Folk.





THE desertion of London on Sunday has already been noted. The congregations of the City churches have been reduced to a mere handful. But the idea that religion is a matter for Sundays only is rapidly dying out. The City churches are very much alive in the week. Short services are now held in the dinner hour, so that business men and girls may snatch a few minutes for meditation and worship, or merely for rest and warmth or coolness, as the time of year requires. For religion has extended its borders, and cares for bodies as well as souls. One of the greatest blessings in London is the crypt in St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, and you cannot pass it without a warm glow of gratitude. Anyone is heartily welcome to come here for a night's rest, free of cost. How much of a human home this must seem to many a poor wastrel, who would otherwise seek the Embankment when he cannot afford a lodging. Many churches again are open in the early morning, to give a resting-place to girls who come into town by early trains and have to wait somewhere before their workshop or office is open.

It is curious to reflect whether our ancient and revered monuments were erected with whole-hearted approval, or whether they were caustically criticised by superior persons of the time. Probably a benevolent despotism prevailed, and nobody dared to express a

contrary opinion. Some of these monuments, now softened and purpled by time and weather, were perhaps hideous when new. But many æons must elapse before the statue of Cobden in Camden Town will seem beautiful, and many others that might be named. There are some much more recent efforts that should be seen, in order to judge of modern English taste, before any violent opinions on them are heard. We no longer suppress our feelings in these matters. Here are a few that have raised very heated discussion: The memorial to Hudson in Hyde Park, by Epstein, has attracted so many visitors that almost anyone in the Park will be able to direct you to it. At Hyde Park Corner is a memorial to artillerymen who fell in the war, and this occasioned some strong letters to *The Times* of approval and disapproval. The Cenotaph in Whitehall deserves thoughtful attention, especially as it has been copied in towns and villages throughout the land. There is also the erection to Nurse Cavell, north of Trafalgar Square.

Beyond discussion, and to be preserved as long as the hills endure, are the battalion emblems cut in the Wiltshire chalk by our soldiers training for the war (for instance, the Leicesters' Tiger). Such spontaneous memorials are always in good taste.

Advertisement has always been a fine art among those who understand it. When we recall that placard of the thirties, "Reform Bill rejected by the Lords," in huge lettering, and then very small beneath, "Meanwhile Jones continues to sell his bear's grease at Fourpence per pot"—the general run of modern appeals seems tame. But some quite new developments are the sky-writing and the flickering changes of coloured electric lights—calculated, one would suppose,

to make mad the guilty and appal the free. But many of the advertisements in our newspapers and periodicals are works of real art or humour, or both. Some of our best draughtsmen are engaged in producing them.

Special attention must be drawn to the railway posters, which have done so much to brighten our streets. These are often the work of Academicians and other well-known artists. They know how to seize the characteristic features of a scene and to put them forth in bold lines and brilliant colours. In the big waiting-hall at Euston is a picture gallery of such posters, and copies may be bought in the Publicity Department close by. The underground railways excel in posters, attracting Londoners to woodland spots within easy distance, where they may

Find tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,  
Sermons in stones and good in everything.

A fashion that has increased greatly of late years is what may be called the Conference habit. Especially at Christmas-time and at Easter, meetings of all kinds are held, with prominent speakers, discussions and social gatherings. In the summer there are short courses of lectures held at the universities as well as the more solemn assemblies of the British Association and the Church Congress. They all promote sound knowledge no doubt, but they seem chiefly desirable in that they bring people together happily and provide an excellent excuse for a holiday. A sense of duty and economy will prevent many people from having a little fling in London, or some other attractive centre, but if a few lectures are thrown in, they can easily persuade themselves that they *ought* to go. In fact these meetings take the same place and fulfil the same ends as the pilgrimages of the Middle Ages.

Travel and the rubbing minds with others which it entails, is now looked upon as not only pleasant, but "paying." Educational institutions, large stores and offices, etc., have recently adopted the plan of giving the members of their staff a "wander-year" in turn, or have sent them abroad in small parties. The new ideas, and refreshment of mind and temper, amply repay the outlay.

Business men are beginning to realise the importance of mental well-being as a factor in production. Hence we hear of music, recreation-rooms, games clubs, welfare centres, and so forth, for factory workers. The fact that it "pays" makes all this much more dignified and palatable than if it were done for charity, paradoxical as it may sound.

Owing to the enthusiastic work of some of our leading musicians, the musical festivals that are held in large towns have now spread into the country, so that quite tiny villages come together with one or two townships, to compete with one another, and to sing together at a concert. Steady work is done all through the winter at part-songs for male voices, female voices, and both together. The results are wonderfully good. It is difficult to overestimate the value of these festivals to sparsely populated areas, in bringing people together and spreading the love of good music.

Similarly there has been a revival of folk-dancing and interest in old folk-songs, as well as a renewed eagerness for good drama. All these pursuits are preferable to the cinema as recreations. The cinema and wireless are undeniable boons, but they fall short in leaving no room for activity, ingenuity and self-expression.

In Wales the Eisteddfod is held annually, and is a



very ancient institution for developing talent in music and poetry. The Welsh have an extraordinary gift for music, and you will find, if you step into a little village chapel, that some half-dozen people are singing so as to endanger the roof. Men returning from work or play will sing most beautifully in the street—frequently hymns of a peculiarly melancholy note. Singing is the breath of life to the Welsh. A man will be at work from six in the morning till six in the evening, hurry home for tea, and a wash, and then hurry off for a singing practice. A group of children were recently found sitting on a hedge in Swansea Road, singing, and conducted by another child using the branch of a tree. They were singing Bach's Passion Music.

One of the most inspiring experiences to be had in London is the annual Welsh service in St. Paul's Cathedral on St. David's Eve. It is all conducted in Welsh, but ignorance of the language need not deter you. There are massed choirs singing their hearts out, and the band of the Grenadier Guards putting their backs into it. When it comes to the Welsh national song, *Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau*, enthusiasm runs riot, and you will find yourself joining in. This last is not a hymn or religious song of any kind, but as it is in Welsh, the Englishman regards it much as Hotspur regarded Glendower's remarks.

To return to modern fashions, there has been of late years a great increase in "Celebrations." Patron saints have anniversaries, great men and women have centenaries, so that hardly a week passes without someone being recalled for honour or criticism. "Whitewash" perhaps, or else what is called "the actual facts," which are usually the opposite of whitewash.

Welshmen have worn a leek on March 1st (St. David's

Day) for centuries, as Shakespeare testifies in *Henry V.*, and as Hogarth confirms. We all look to see green ribbon and the shamrock about the streets on St. Patrick's Day (March 17th). But it is only of late years that the English have bothered to recognise St. George's Day, or even know when it is. Now, however, April 23rd is made much of. Minute inquiry into dates has proved futile, but England has determined to celebrate on this day the following events: St. George's martyrdom "a long time ago"; Shakespeare's birth in 1564; the victory of Richard Cœur de Lion over Saladin in the Third Crusade; the institution of the Order of St. George (later, the Garter) at Windsor by Edward III.; and the naval attack on Zeebrugge in 1918. Roses are worn as the emblem of England. Special services are held in St. Paul's, and in St. George's Cathedral, Southwark. The famous bells of Bow Church are rung, as well as those of St. Clement Danes. There are civic receptions, dinners and dances.

Stratford-on-Avon, however, is the chief centre of attraction on St. George's Day. Here some sixty different countries of the world unfurl their national flags in honour of Shakespeare, and wreaths are laid on his tomb. Theatrical celebrations last longer than the actual day.

Empire Day is quite a modern institution. It has not yet seized the imagination of the nation as a whole, and many sections of the community are quite unmoved by it. Many will ask, with lack-lustre eye, "What are all these flags for?" Well, they are intended to celebrate the extension and consolidation of the Empire during the reign of Victoria; and her birthday, May 24th, was chosen for a general display of loyalty. Perhaps the Assyrians and Persians had such celebrations of their

growth in size and beneficence. Perhaps the Romans celebrated Hadrian's birthday like that. Perhaps not. Anyhow the children in our schools have a good time. In some the work of the summer term is dislocated and almost held in abeyance, through rehearsing songs and pageants for the great day. And all this is to the good. Our Public Schools, if they know so much as whether there be an Empire Day, salute the flag and be done with it.

A movement has lately been set on foot for teaching our poorer boys in the elementary schools to play cricket on a proper field, under the instruction of public-school boys. Nothing could be better for undermining class hatred than a game of this kind; unless it be another kind of game—camping out. This has points of advantage over cricket, in that the poorer boys of country districts know much more about a struggle with wind and weather, about field-lore and wood-lore, than do their wealthier companions. So that the benefits conferred are rather in the other direction than in cricket. A "Camp of Understanding" was recently formed at Linton Park, near Maidstone in Kent, composed in equal proportions of public-school boys and boys who leave school at fourteen to earn their living. Friendships made in games or in exploring the countryside, even if they do not last, are always a happy memory, and produce a real respect for the point of view of someone whose life runs on different lines from one's own.

The idea that happiness is the chief ingredient in education has found expression in the modern "School Journeys." A party of children are taken by their teachers to the seaside for a fortnight, and allowed to "run wild," and get brown and fat. They make

important little notes of all they observe; but the information element is kept quite in the background. It has been found that children with a physical defect, such as deafness or an impediment in speech, make great advances in these conditions because the desire to hear and to talk is so compelling. The school gets up bazaars, concerts, and other means of obtaining money, during the year, in order to meet the expense of these outings, and the parents contribute.

A very healthy feature of modern English life is the establishment of small adventures in home handicrafts, such as pottery, weaving and woodwork. Beautiful effects in design and colour are often found in these out-of-the-way industries, and though the price is often higher than you would pay in a big shop, you get something that will not be repeated and that no one else has, instead of something that has been turned out by the million.

Although our country inns are often very attractive, many are not, and the little public-houses in towns are often abominable. Attempts to make them decent and pleasant have been made by a company called the "Trust Houses," and inns under its management can be found in plenty. In them, the profit on the sale of intoxicating liquor is either nothing or so little as to prevent the pushing of its sale. The Peoples' Refreshment House Association is another such company with similar aims. It may be well to remember in going about England's byways, that inns are legally obliged to serve you with a meal if you desire it. Some of them prefer to do nothing but the easy work of selling drink, but the slightest firmness in your request for food will be sufficient.

The endeavour to make village life less dull,

especially in the winter months, has led to the many Women's Institutes now in full working order. The women of the district have a committee, and make their own programme of concerts, lectures, dramatic performances, exhibitions of work, competitions and so forth, with the help of outsiders now and again, and the loan of some well-to-do resident's garden or room. Recently, two or three institutes combined their efforts to produce *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with great success. A rough-spoken simple villager took the part of Quince with vigour and delight, and was anxious to know who Shakespeare was and whether he was still alive—to which, by the way, the answer is still in the affirmative.

A very estimable fashion has grown of late years. Some rich man, successful merchant or landowner, gives something to the nation, such as a library or a public park or a museum. Perhaps it is as much a means of quieting the conscience as were the gifts to the Church of bygone ages. You are prowling about Surrey, enjoying a bit of scenery that you have "discovered," sit down on a rustic bench, to find an inscription on it, to the effect that "this seat and so many acres of the surrounding country have been preserved to the nation by So-and-so as a beauty spot." It has the immediate effect of driving you off to find something else . . . for yourself . . . to trespass. W. S. Gilbert, in his play *Ruddigore*, hits off this trait in our national character. In desiring to annoy the portraits of his ancestors, the hero threatens to present them to the nation, thereby making sure that no eye will ever rest on them again. Certainly our National Portrait Gallery in Trafalgar Square is not uncomfortably overcrowded.

“Garden Cities” are a product of recent years. The main idea is that the whole thing is planned, instead of “just growing” like Topsy. The houses, varying in size from cottages to quite ambitious buildings, are arranged so as to give a pleasant general effect, instead of being laid down in stiff rows. Trees and bushes are left in their original positions. No walls or tall fences separate the gardens. There are common recreation-grounds, meeting-halls, and buildings for religious services. Clubs and societies for sport or mental culture, are fostered, so as to encourage a kind of communal life.

These sensible, artistic, labour-saving towns must be very satisfactory to their inhabitants. But to the majority of English people they leave something to be desired. We like to be artistic and hygienic, and we love clubs and games, but we cannot bear to have these things ordered and arranged for us, and talked about as something special. So that the “Garden City” life is not so sought after as might be supposed.

Although *Gardens* are one of the outstanding features of English life, nothing was said about them in the chapter on “Scenery,” for the simple reason that an Englishman tries his best to hide his garden from all eyes but those of his friends. High walls or very trim thick hedges are put up between passers-by and the glory of flowers in our suburban gardens, not to speak of the more ambitious gardens of our great country houses. The “Garden Cities” have made an effort to abolish the hedge and fence, but so far there is nothing in England to match the charming effect of the entirely open gardens of, say, Toronto. People fear that the flowers would be stolen, but public opinion would soon check that, and as for a determined

thief, he will not be kept away by a hedge. Now there is a movement on foot for owners of beautiful gardens, large or small, to throw them open at certain times, so that any who care may wander about and pick up ideas for their own gardens. An attempt has been made to set aside one special day in August, to be called "Garden Sunday," on which *all* gardens shall be free and open. This may be good for a start, but a general fashion for showing rather than hiding one's contribution to the world's cheer is more to be desired. King George has set a fine example with his gardens at Sandringham.

The notice, placed about the streets of London, "Safety First," is a new thing, occasioned by the increasing dangers of motor traffic. Although intended merely to warn people to be careful, it has an ugly sound, and is directly contrary to the age-long character of the race. A more happy wording might have called attention to the need of looking after other people's safety as well as our own speed. As it stands, we are ashamed of it.

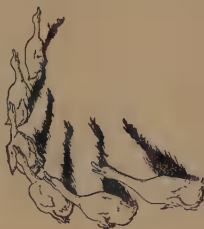
### Books

*Our Gardens*, by S. R. Hole (Dent).

*The Building of Satellite Towns*, by C. B. Purdom (Dent).

*The Garden City*, by C. B. Purdom (Dent).

*The Evolution of an English Town*, by G. Home (Dent).





## CHAPTER XXII

### SOME GOOD CENTRES FOR SHORT VISITS

WHILE country inns are adapted for those with some time to spare and a leisurely habit, our visitors who must condense much into a short stay would do well to select one, or two, of our provincial towns of great historic interest, and study the main points thoroughly. Delightful excursions into the surrounding country are available from all of them, so that the interest need not be purely historical.

For this purpose, Oxford, Cambridge, or any one of the cathedral cities would be excellent. These are so packed with things to see, that it is impossible even to summarise them. Sometimes the visitor feels shy and strange on entering a cathedral. Either he is a blank about the special points of architecture, or monuments that should be noted; or he is armed with a guide-book, and finds that the shrine or the chapel, or some other famous feature, can only be seen by special request; and this means having a verger to see him round, pouring forth information, and expecting a fee or a tip. Anxiety as to the amount of this tip, coupled with misery from the flood of names and dates, often leads the visitor to saunter in quietly, look round a bit, and pass out. Very enjoyable as far as it goes, but annoying when a friend exclaims later on, "Oh, didn't you see so-and-so? Why, it's *the* thing to go there for."



To meet this difficulty, a reform was started in Chester in 1920. All visitors' fees were abolished. Other cathedrals have followed suit, Exeter, Canterbury, Winchester, Bristol, Ely, Gloucester, Manchester, Rochester, St. Albans, Salisbury, Southwell and Worcester, and no doubt the rest will soon be added to the list. The whole place is left free and open. Opportunities are given for voluntary offerings by pilgrims. Little papers, booklets, postcards, etc., are provided, which can be bought for a few pence and read at leisure. In some cases the spirit of welcome is shown by the establishment of inexpensive places for rest and refreshment near the cathedral. The results observed are these: visitors have increased in number; the money given voluntarily has exceeded the former fees; no damage is done, nor is the privilege ever abused; and visitors are often glad to join in any service that may be available. And indeed there are few experiences more impressive than a short cathedral evensong, when the clergy and choir come in and go through the psalms, prayers, lessons and anthem, absolutely regardless of whether there is a congregation or not. It is being left alone that is the charm, both in sight-seeing and in service.

However, tastes differ and cathedrals do not attract everyone. So a few towns have been picked out, any *one* of which will yield enough interest to warrant a stay of a few days.

STRATFORD-ON-AVON stands pre-eminent, but in the multiplicity of interests, do not forget to notice the bend in the church, with its beautiful significance.

BATH, which has been called a microcosm of England, rivals Glastonbury in the antiquity if not the sanctity of its legendary history. We go back

almost to Troy for our origins. Another son of Æneas, younger than Iulus, named Brutus, came over here and named our island Britain. Later on a young prince of this royal line was afflicted with leprosy, was an outcast and became a swineherd. The pigs caught his leprosy and were driven into the marshy ground formed by the hot springs of Somerset. But lo, they emerged cleansed of their leprosy. The royal swineherd made a simple deduction and plunged into the marsh himself. He too was cured, returned to Court, became king, and built the city of Bath. Thus legend. But truth is stranger than fiction. Sober science and investigation of earthworks in the neighbourhood point to population here some thousand years before Christ.

The Romans naturally prized the hot springs (they yield nearly 8000 gallons per hour at about 112° F.) and they built a worthy setting for them. The great Roman bath was not excavated until the closing decades of the nineteenth century, but of course the medicinal waters had been used for ages. Dipping-cups were discovered in 1885, showing that the Romans drank, as well as bathed in, the waters. To be noted specially are the marks in the stone of the bare feet of the Roman bathers, where they turned and jumped in. Occasionally a shell is found in the waters, giving evidence of the presence of the sea at some time. The Englishman might say with the tortoise, "There are parts of myself that I have never seen."

Something of the Celtic spirit is shown in some of the Roman remains; perhaps a British sculptor carried out Roman orders with a dash of his own imagination. Now there was a temple at Bath to Minerva, as the

goddess of hot springs. Unearthed in 1790 was a curious carving of the Gorgon's head, that Minerva adopted as her shield device. But the sculptor has given the Gorgon a beard and moustache and a frightening look, quite unlike the freezing dignity of the classical head. This bit of carving is a good study for the antiquarian, and a full discussion of it is given in Haverfield's *Romanisation of Roman Britain* (Clarendon Press).

The chief historical event in Bath was the coronation of Edgar in 973, and it was a yearly custom afterwards to elect a king from among the townsmen, to be feasted by the richest men in Bath. The famous Beau Nash was the last to be honoured in this way. He came to Bath in 1704 after having exercised his wit and organising powers at Oxford and the Temple, and he raised Bath from the rough uncouth ways of a country town to all the elegance and etiquette that distinguished it during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

So largely does Bath figure in English life and literature that it is really necessary to go there, if only for a few hours. Time will be saved by going to the Information Bureau at the Pump Room, where lists of walks, excursions and amusements, as well as every kind of local lore, can be had for the asking. Be sure to look at the sedan-chair in the Pump Room, and the bath-chairs outside. If you have any love for Dogberry, if you suspect his years, look at one of the old watchman's boxes, still preserved in Norfolk Crescent. Slip a *Northanger Abbey* or *Persuasion* into your pocket and look for the spot in Union Street where you picture Captain Wentworth overtaking Charles and Anne, and deciding that he could go a little farther than Gay Street—the happiest moment

in all Jane Austen's novels. Remember that Mr. Pickwick put up at the White Hart, just opposite the Pump Room.

The view from Beechen Cliff is said to be the finest view of a city to be seen in England.

The journey to Bath from London can now be made entirely by road. A motor-bus leaves Hammer-smith about nine a.m. and reaches Bath before five p.m. An interval is allowed for lunch at Newbury, and every care is taken for making the journey a pleasant one. In this way some renewal of the old coaching ways gives us a view of the country that we miss in the train journey.

The "Citizen House," Bath, is a "little" theatre, started in 1915 for the soldiers, with a mystery play. The soldiers used to occupy every inch of room, and even sat on one another's knees or on the stage. Special plays are performed to bring in folk-lore, music and handicrafts. Plays of Shakespeare, Sheridan and Gay have been given in the Pump Room and in the public parks; and special attention is given to eighteenth-century plays, because they reflect the life of Bath in its prime. These players have realised that happiness comes from creation, so all the company share in the dressing, the carpentry, the electric lighting, etc., as well as in the acting.

WELLS is the cathedral town of the diocese of "Bath and Wells," and has the attractiveness of all our cathedral towns, including a famous clock and an episcopal residence of ancient date, complete with wall and moat. The *way* there from Bath is remarkable. The Cheddar Gorge is unique in English scenery. In this very sleepy quarter are the Mendip Hills, and they appear to have yawned. A wild, precipitous gorge has

been made, and you drive down a road with towering cliffs on each side. At the bottom, springs burst forth from the hills and combine with a waterfall to form a lake. Romantic caverns are in plenty. Two have been explored and lit by electric light, showing fine stalactites and stalagmites. Near the caverns are little shops, kiosks and booths, where the far-famed cheese is sold.

ST. ALBANS, though in fact a cathedral town, makes a special appeal to visitors because it is so easily reached from London. From Barnet the bus runs along the straight Roman road to the old-time Verulamium. As you walk about its up-and-down streets and alleys, you must call to mind that its Roman status was far higher than that of London. The positions were almost reversed, for Londinium was a kind of riverside resort for the aristocrats of Verulamium. A fine specimen of the Roman Wall is preserved; a little prodding at it with a stick will explain why it has lasted so many centuries. Its setting amid fields and trees is beautiful but a little forlorn.

St. Albans provides many things for study beside the Roman remains. What is left of a very fine monastery, and especially the gateway, are grouped near the abbey, which dates back to Saxon times, though with much rebuilding and some not always judicious "restoration." The Mercian king Offa founded the monastery in 793, in memory of Alban, our first martyr.

The clock-tower, in the centre of the town, kept up the ringing of the curfew bell until the sixties of last century. Close to the clock-tower is the Fleur-de-lys Inn, a spot of interest for French visitors. Here King John of France was entertained as a prisoner after

Poitiers. So pleased was he that after his return to France he promptly sent home some English prisoners upon hearing that they came from St. Albans. Earlier still, French people stayed at this inn after the "Fair of Lincoln" in 1216.

An august literary pilgrimage can be enacted here, "counting" almost as one to Stratford. Even if you are not among those who ascribe Shakespeare's plays and the Authorised Version of the Bible to him, Bacon nevertheless did write his own Essays, and did put English science on its feet. He is buried under the altar of St. Michael's Church (see chapter xvi.).

An interest of another kind clings to the old Fighting Cocks Inn, in the most charming part of the place, near the causeway and the Roman Wall. Cock-fighting is one of the oldest sports of England, possibly brought by the Romans, since they appear to have indulged in it at home. It still goes on in some remote parts of our islands, but was suppressed by Act of Parliament in 1834. This inn has preserved the actual old cockpit, and one can well imagine Master Bacon attending a fight here, for the sport was quite aristocratic. A writer of his time says: "There is no pleasure more noble, delightsome, or void of cozenage and deceit than this pleasure of Cocking." Likely birds were carefully trained, and some became as famous as racehorses. The word "cockpit" entered the language permanently. Shakespeare uses it of the theatre in the Prologue to *Henry V.*, and Belgium has long been called the "cockpit of Europe." But in the eighteenth century, when English life in all directions seemed to reach its lowest ebb, the sport became cruel, and metal spurs were fastened on the birds' legs. While fox-hunters maintain that the "fox enjoys the chase," no one could pretend

that the armed cocks were enjoying themselves. The strongest plea, though no doubt unintentional, against all such sports is John Davidson's poem, *The Runnable Stag*. Here is one verse:

For a matter of twenty miles and more,  
 By the densest hedge and the highest wall,  
 Through herds of bullocks he baffled the lore  
 Of harbourer, huntsman, hounds and all,  
 Of harbourer, hounds and all,—  
     The stag of warrant, the wily stag,  
     For twenty miles, and five, and five,  
     He ran, and he never was caught alive,  
     This stag, this runnable stag.

Wordsworth's *Hart-leap Well* tells a similar tale, giving a picture of the suffering hounds as well as the animal being chased. The closing lines are these:

Never to blend our pleasure or our pride  
 With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels.

Another town within easy and pleasant reach of London is GUILDFORD. Easy, for you can get a non-stop train from Waterloo, taking only forty minutes for the run, or by car you have the well-laid Portsmouth Road. Pleasant, because if you look out of the carriage window, just as the train saunters out of Waterloo, you will see the Houses of Parliament, Big Ben, Westminster Abbey, St. Thomas's Hospital, the Roman Catholic Cathedral, the Tate Gallery, and Lambeth Palace, with glimpses of the Thames and the shipping. And far, far pleasanter if you go by road, since you pass through lovely woods during a great part of the way.

The name Guildford implies a river, and the River Wey adds greatly to the beauty of the town. It also implies a seat of mediaeval industry. Like so many

others, the town was a centre of the woollen trade, and here the Dominican Friars used to celebrate (down by the river where the fulling-mills were) the great feast of St. Blaise, the patron of the woollen trade. About half-way up the main High Street, which is very noisy with cars and chars-à-bancs, you can step aside into a little pool of peace. St. Mary's Church seems very friendly and charming. The tower is the oldest part—Anglo-Saxon—and the simple bold Norman arches and pillars make the whole look like a cathedral in miniature. Just as at Stratford-on-Avon there is that strangely fascinating feature of a bend, so that the chancel is not in line with the nave; and this feature is repeated in the side chapel (it is supposed to represent the inclination of Christ's head on the cross). Then there are delightful little stone recesses for images, removed of course by Puritans, and those openings in the wall of the chancel, called "squints," for people in old days, who were not admitted into the church, to see the elevation of the Host. St. Mary's was the Court church, and you can easily imagine the Plantagenet kings, as well as Langton, Hubert de Burgh, Simon de Montfort and other of our heroes, worshipping here, and St. Thomas of Canterbury himself celebrating at the altar.

Little side streets, with overhanging houses and stone flights to the doors, invite you away from the main road continually. But go up to the big clock dominating the town, and walk into the oak-panelled Town Hall, built in 1683, and arranged with seats for a quite modern bed of justice (it is all quite open). Portraits of Charles II. (with his usual deep melancholy), James II., by Sir Peter Lely, and William III. (grossly copied from Charles II.), add dignity and



colour to the room. Farther in is a modern-looking "board-room," arranged for business; but sitting quite casually on the mantelpiece, like sixpenny ornaments, are some objects of priceless value. These are standard pint and quart measures of Elizabethan days, of enormous weight and strength, as though intended to last for ever, and marked "E.R. 1601." Of still greater interest on the mantelpiece are two "toll" bowls, the size of a large breakfast cup. In the corn markets it was customary to "take toll" of every sack of corn, and this was done by dipping the bowl twice, and taking that amount as "market due." Lying by the side of each bowl there is a flat piece of wood, like a ruler, called the "strike"; this was used to level the corn in the bowl, because it was not fair to heap up the corn in taking toll, and the surplus was "struck" off. It is characteristic of the English that these things are not placed in a museum, but just left in their natural surroundings. In a museum they would fail to arouse any interest. They were actually used for taking toll within the present century.

Upstairs are further treasures in a room continually used for town council meetings: the mantelpiece is made of Surrey chalk cut into elaborate figures, surrounding a grate of Sussex hand-wrought iron (see chapter xiii.).

Farther up the town is the Grammar School, founded as early as the first year of Henry VIII. And just opposite is an old almshouse for "decayed tradesmen." One hardly thought that tradesmen could decay, but apparently they do, in quite substantial numbers, and seem very cheerful about it.

The Castle is quite close to the High Street, situated on a hill giving fine views of the town, and surrounded

by a rather too primly-kept public garden. The King and Court often used this as a residence, and imagination of its former glory can run riot as you sit and watch the pigeons, wheeling and crooning in and out the tiny slits whence arrows flew in Norman times. It is pleasant to think that the Castle is *not* in use to-day, for until fairly recently it was the jail of the town. Now you can wander in and out and up and down as you please, for the inclusive charge of twopence, which there is nobody there to collect.

The museum of the local Archæological Society has a good collection of objects discovered in country cottages (see chapter xiv.).

Children will be interested to know that the Rev. Charles Dodgson, the mathematician, lived and died at Guildford. They know him better as "Lewis Carroll," the creator of "Alice."

Perhaps the delightful water-way from London to GREENWICH will be started again before these lines are read. There used to be no better way of spending an afternoon and of seeing London's shipping than to take a penny steamer from Westminster down to Greenwich. It was on just such a river trip that Turner saw the *Fighting Téméraire* being tugged to her last mooring. The masterpiece which resulted he always refused to sell, in spite of many offers; and when leaving his pictures to the nation, he specially excepted the *Téméraire* from those which the executors were allowed to choose for themselves. The Thames will become London's happiest road again as it was under the Tudors, in time. Meanwhile we get to Greenwich by train, tram or bus. The Royal Naval College was for centuries a royal palace, at least as far back as Henry V. It was a great favourite with the

Tudors; Henry VIII., Mary and Elizabeth were all born there. From its terrace along the river-front Elizabeth watched her great seamen start on their perilous expeditions, giving them her countenance and her blessing, and indeed anything but her money. Any boy who hankers after a sea life will enjoy the portraits of admirals and pictures of sea battles on view in the painted hall.

We get our time from Greenwich, and our longitude. So that when you are at the great Observatory in the park, you feel quite at the centre of things in general, for you are neither east nor west, but at 0 on the map. The Park is an ancient pleasure ground worth visiting for its beauty and its history. From the Observatory there are fine views, and a long avenue of chestnuts stretches away to the Blackheath Gate. When these are in flower, and the yellow laburnums mingle with white and red may-blossom, you hardly care to think about history. But Henry VIII. married Catharine of Aragon at Greenwich, and laid out the park lavishly. Charles II. gave his money and attention to the flower beds. Later, Greenwich Fair occasioned scenes of rowdyism, much as Mayfair did, and the tide of fashion gradually drifted westward. "Greenwich dinners" are no longer the main objective, but you must not end your visit without a meal of whitebait.

A glance at the map will show you where England was most vulnerable in the long struggle with France. Here were the FIVE PORTS charged with the duty of building and maintaining ships for the king. Hastings, Romney, Hythe, Dover and Sandwich were the original five, but Winchelsea and Rye were added later. Since they produced all the navy we had up to Tudor times, it was only natural that their number

should be increased. An old charter of Edward I. refers to earlier ones in the reigns of Edward the Confessor and William the Conqueror. In Domesday Book Dover is ordered to pay twenty ships to the king. We find some curious privileges that were granted to these towns in return for the shipbuilding. The very words used are interesting bits of history. These are some of them: Exemption from tax and tallage; the right of "Soc and Sac," that is, the right to try their own criminal and civil law-suits ("soc" is an old word for a quarrel); the right of "Toll and Theam," that is, the right to levy toll and to hold serfs; "Bloodwith and Fledwith," or the right to punish murderers and those who tried to flee; "Infangtheof and Outfangtheof," or power to imprison and execute felons (it seems a pity we have lost such expressive words); "Mundbreich," or power to build dykes against the sea on any man's land (the shifting nature of the coast accounts for this privilege; it will be noticed that Winchelsea and Rye are now inland towns, and Sandwich has had much trouble with the sand, as its name suggests; about five miles from the mainland are the Goodwin Sands, the most dangerous shoal on our coast); "Waives and Strays" was the right to seize cattle or other lost property unclaimed within a year and a day; "Flotsom, Jetsom and Witsom," or the right to anything cast ashore.

The Cinque Ports had a Parliament of their own, or "Portmote" as it was called, and the Lord Warden was a kind of king, holding a court of justice at Dover.

Deal is our earliest link with history, for here Julius Cæsar landed. Or if he did not, no one can assign a likelier place, so what need to doubt?

Winchelsea is the most attractive of all the Cinque

Ports. The sea has played games with it in the most absurd way. In Norman times it was one of England's chief ports. In the middle of the thirteenth century the sea burst over it, destroying six churches, hundreds of houses and innumerable ships. Some years later the sea made a second attack and swept the whole town away. Edward I. encouraged the inhabitants to build another town higher up, some three miles away on an elevated spur of the Weald. After more than a hundred years of prosperity for the new port, the sea changed its mind again, and receded, leaving the "port" high and dry and ridiculous. Queen Elizabeth was asked to help in the new trouble. She came, smiled on the plans for new streets laid out in squares, called it "Little London," but apparently did not help it in any more material way.

The church of Winchelsea is of historic interest. A church larger than the needs of the town points to some ebb tide of fortune (as in the case of Norfolk and the Cotswolds—see chapter xxv.). The Black Death, in the middle of the fourteenth century (see chapter iv.) did more than any conquest or invention to alter the face and fortunes of England. Some places were almost denuded of their population and among these was Winchelsea. The church then in building was left *unfinished* for lack of builders, and there were never again sufficient people to require so large a church.

WHITBY is on the north-east coast, and is quite unlike any other town. The ending "by", so frequent in that region, is Danish for a town, corresponding to the Saxon "ton" and "ing," and the East Anglian "thorpe." Originally therefore it was Whitetown, but has long lost any claim to the name. The steep climbs,

the old harbour and fishing-boats, with the abbey keeping watch over the whole from its hill, give a distinctive air to the place, in spite of the new part with its hotels and boarding-houses, shops and amusements. These can be avoided, and delightful inland walks accomplished.

A monastery was founded here in the seventh century by King Oswy, who summoned a synod in 664 to determine the date for keeping Easter and the shape of the tonsure. The ruins are of the abbey founded by St. Hilda in 566. The literary interest is considerable, since it was here that Cædmon, the first English poet, lived and died; there is a cross erected to his memory in the churchyard. Henry VI. granted Whitby a fair.

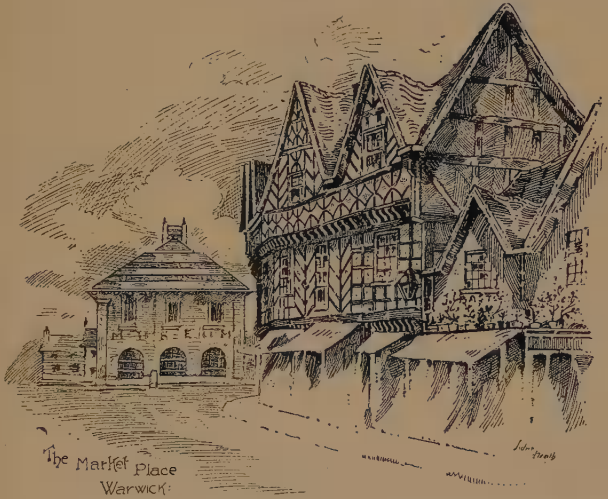
Turning from the coast to the midland, WARWICK is a town of many attractions, of which only three shall be mentioned:

First, there is St. Mary's Church, founded before the Conquest, with its marvellous Beauchamp Chapel, a pure Gothic building of the fifteenth century. This is one of England's "gems."

Second, the Castle, spoken of as the most magnificent of the ancient feudal mansions, still used as a residence, and again as "the most princely seat that is within the midland parts of this realm."

Third, the Hospital of the Earl of Leicester (Elizabeth's Leycester, her Dudley). It was founded in 1571, originally for twelve poor brethren not possessing more than five pounds a year. The half-timbered building is itself a sight. Sunday is the best day for a visit, because then the brethren wear their uniform—a black gown, and a scarf over the shoulder with the badge of a silver bear and a ragged staff.

Children who have duly “done” their English history will like to find in Warwick stories about the giant Guy, and his big porridge pot and fork in the castle. Guy’s pot is big enough to hold two or three children, and has often done so. In castle revels it was used as a vast punch-bowl, with gallons and gallons of the famous five-fold Christmas drink. Guy’s



Cliff is named after him, and it is said that his ghost walks the castle; it is never seen, but makes its presence known by the sound of enormously heavy footfalls. Children will like to know that Warwick has records of a visit from William the Conqueror; associations with the Black Hound of Arden, who beheaded Piers Gaveston, with the poor Duke of Clarence who had more than he required of Malmsey wine, and with the great Earl of Warwick the King-maker. And there is also to be seen the complete

suit of tiny armour, made for the "Royal Imp," a prince who died in his childhood.

The great advantage of spending a little while in Warwick is that you are in the heart of Shakespeare's country, and any walk or drive will remind you of passages from the plays. Although the great forest of Arden has disappeared, there are beautiful portions of it left, and the whole tone of the scenery must be much as it was three centuries ago. The Roman roads mentioned in chapter xvii. are all in evidence in Warwickshire—the Foss Way, Watling Street and Icknield Way. In this old country of the chase may be seen remains of the deer-leaps mentioned in chapter iv.

BRADFORD-ON-AVON (Wilts) has the only perfect Saxon church in England; a terrace of fine stone houses in a kind of amphitheatre round the river; a tithe barn; a Tudor mansion; two notable bridges; and the whole place full of artistic beauty. So that a party of people with varied interests would enjoy a visit here.

STAMFORD (Lincs) was one of the chief cities of the Danes, and has fine stone houses, churches and inns. Lately archæological remains have been found, so that there is a feast for history students, in various directions.

An old Roman-Saxon town, Wimburnhamynstre, now known as WIMBORNE, is in Dorset, just where the rivers Allen and Stour meet. The church was founded by Edward the Confessor, and the grammar school by the mother of Henry VII. Here are a "chained" library and a "breeches" Bible. The clock is one of those made by the monk of Glastonbury. (Other clocks by him are at Ottery St. Mary, Exeter and Wells.)



SHREWSBURY (pronounced Shrowsbury) is a combination of many delights—up-and-down streets, with absurd names, such as Wyle Cop and Dogpole, old timber houses, and historical associations in plenty.

The town has always been a fighting spot, owing to its situation on the Welsh border, and there are remains of strong walls and castles. The Welsh princes continually attacked it, took it, and were driven from it again. Shakespeare, in *1 Henry IV.*, describes the battle here in which Hotspur was killed. Falstaff says he and Percy have fought a long hour by Shrewsbury clock (Act V. iv. 151). But this was not exactly a lie on Falstaff's part, because Shrewsbury clock was at a standstill when Shakespeare put in this topical joke.

In the Civil War Charles made it his headquarters, till it was taken by the Parliamentarians. It seems to have been in a continual state of packing up; but to-day you could hardly fix on a more restful spot. As the town is built on a peninsula formed by the Severn, it is very rich in bridges, the two chief ones being called the Welsh Bridge and the English Bridge. The railway station is so long and so catchy that you must allow yourself some margin of time when changing there; and change there you invariably do, since it is an important junction (in fact the railway seems to have inherited the old town's spirit of changefulness). If you run to buy a paper you may find that your carriage has disappeared in your brief absence, and is either at another platform, or is lurking outside till there is room to shunt in again, or has gone off to Wales.

The old churches are numerous, especially noteworthy being St. Mary's, dating from the *tenth* century, and giving examples of many styles of architecture

The early Liège glass in the windows affords a little mystery; it was brought over by the then vicar at the beginning of the nineteenth century, but nobody knows where or how he obtained it.

The cakes for which the town is famed can be bought at scores of shops, but the lover of *Ingoldsby Legends* will buy them at Pailin's:

And a Shrewsbury cake  
Of Pailin's own make.

The school is one of the leading public schools (indeed one of the "mystic nine" named in the Commission of 1868). Like so many others, it was founded in the time of Edward VI., and has had some celebrated men as pupils, among them Sir Philip Sidney and Darwin, not to mention many literary men of to-day. The old buildings are now used as a library, and the school has moved to larger premises on the other side of the town.

Much of English life, old and new, can be studied at COVENTRY. Hardly any other provincial town gives such a combination of ancient interest with *varied* commercial activities of the present day. The name means "Convent Town," for in 1043 Earl Leofric and his wife Godiva founded a Benedictine priory here. The story runs that Lady Godiva petitioned her husband to lessen the heavy taxation of the citizens; he consented to do so, on condition that she rode unclothed through the streets. This she did, while all the people remained indoors—all save one, a tailor, who was struck blind for looking at her. A figure of this "peeping Tom" can be seen projecting from an upper window at the corner of Smithford Street. There is now a window commemorating Lady Godiva

in St. Mary's Hall. This interesting hall dates from the fifteenth century, and was erected by the united Gilds of the town. Over a fine crypt there is a magnificent chamber with a roof of carved oak, an ancient stained-glass window, and some tapestry almost as old.

Another name for Coventry is "The City of Three Spires," from its three great churches. The spire of St. Michael's is over three hundred feet high, and this church is the largest parish church in England. All three of these churches have specially interesting architectural features. Some parts of the old wall still remain, and two gates. Children will remember the great duel that *didn't* take place between Dukes Hereford and Norfolk in the reign of Richard II., in 1397. The scene of this affair that had such dire consequences for Richard was Gosford Green, just outside the eastern wall of Coventry.

There are fine old timbered and overhanging houses, an Elizabethan grammar school, and some interesting almshouses. Commercially, too, the town is ancient. Its woollens were famous in the fifteenth century, with very specially good dyeing, so that "as true as Coventry blue" was proverbial. Later on, silk ribbon was a speciality, and at one time, when ribbon went out of fashion, Coventry suffered considerably. Later, again, it became noted for bicycles, watches and other metal-work. There are several fairs held annually. In one way and another, therefore, it can hardly fail to interest any visitor to England. We have a phrase "To send anyone to Coventry," meaning, to punish him by not speaking to him (usually in school), but no one has been able to trace its connection with the town.

The above-named towns have been selected from all parts of England, so that wherever business or

pleasure may take you, one at least will be within easy reach. But whether within reach or not, you must go to CHESTER. It is a cathedral town, but must be specially mentioned because of its unique interest.

As its name implies, it was the site of a Roman camp. By the way, it would be an illuminating exercise to take a blank map of England and put in all the places that have some form of the word "castra" in them; such as Colchester, Worcester, Doncaster. As "Deva," Chester was an important Roman town, like Verulamium. Its Welsh name, "Caerlleon Vawr" also means the Great Camp of the Legion.

Now here are some of the numberless joys of the city: The walls are still perfect throughout their entire circuit of two miles, and on these you can have delightful walks. There are four gates, Northgate, Eastgate, Watergate, and Bridgegate. Streets cross the city from gate to gate, giving a simple plan, and meeting at the centre by St. Peter's Church (founded before the Conquest) and the market cross. These four streets contain the famous "Rows," which attract people more than any other feature of the place. These are covered arcades—not on the street-level, but raised to the next story—with the houses running both over them and under them. It is as though the front first floors had had their outer walls removed and were open to the public. These arcades are dry overhead and underfoot, are stone paved and balustraded with black oak. The pedestrians flit up and down the frequent flights of steps between the pavement of the street and the Rows. Great mystery surrounds their origin, and various theories have been put forth. The very shape of the town suggests that these streets belonged to the Roman Deva. The Romans always

seemed to think in straight lines and right angles and squares. So it is supposed that these curiously shaped Rows are the result of mediaeval "carrying on" of the open stall in a Roman street. In the Rows there are fine old timbered houses of the seventeenth century, and some stone-groined roofing of the fourteenth.

In the city, too, are numerous ancient churches, and celebrated houses, such as Bishop Lloyd's House and God's Providence House. The latter is a timbered house, inscribed with the words: "God's Providence is mine Inheritance." The legend is that during the Plague this was the only house that remained entirely free from it, and the owner pardonably imagined himself in special Divine favour.

The old song about the Miller of the Dee, with its refrain:

I care for nobody, no, not I,  
And nobody cares for me,

arose from the fact that great wealth came from the grinding of corn at the mill attached to the monastery, and the miller was independent of everyone. It is this independence that is conveyed in the song, not pathetic loneliness, as the tune suggests! The tune probably imitates the monotonous sound of the mill. The bridge near the spot is to be seen, but the actual mill is no longer there.

The Grosvenor Bridge, a single stone span of two hundred feet, is the largest in Europe, except one over the Danube.

The cathedral has already been mentioned, but remember that it has been called "the most friendly and welcoming of English cathedrals."

A quite short visit to Chester would be most economically spent in dawdling about the Rows,

running up and down the steps, and buying things you do not really want. There are many cathedrals and bridges in other places, but the Rows you shall see nowhere else.

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*Cathedral Series* (Dent).

*Notes on the Cathedrals*, by W. H. Fairbairns (S.P.C.K., Northumberland Avenue). 2d. each. These tiny books, some forty in number, give the chief dates and other points for reference, and will go into the waistcoat pocket.

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SECTION IV

A NATION OF SHOPKEEPERS







## CHAPTER XXIII

### FAIRS AND MARKETS

FROM the earliest days when men met together, either for mutual protection or for exchange of goods, a *Market* has been an important thing, hedged about with restrictions and privileges. Desire to buy what you want, and to sell what you have in excess, is a kind of natural instinct. It also seems a kind of natural instinct to try to prevent other people from cutting you out in either direction. Townsmen could not keep strangers from coming to compete with them, but they made the stranger *pay* for the privilege. The market-place in the centre of the town had often a cross, to give it a religious sanction. Beneath or near the cross was often a round or octagonal stone roof supported on pillars, where the tolls were received, where the stone for weighing was kept, and also the standard balance, or "king's beam." Many of these market buildings may be seen in country towns, as at Salisbury, High Wycombe, Pembridge (Herefordshire), Princes Risborough, Somerton (Somerset), Chichester, Banbury, and a modern one at Enfield. Others, as at Shrewsbury and Amersham, are larger, and have a moot-house above them.

*Fairs* differed from markets in being open to strangers, and giving an annual opportunity for laying in objects not usually obtainable, and also for hiring

servants. The word "fair" has had three distinct meanings, changing as customs changed. At first it meant a holy day (Latin "feria") and involved worship at a shrine. The throngs of pilgrims who came from all sorts of "outlandish" parts to worship, were handy as a market for goods, so that the word came to mean a market. Amusements were provided to relieve the minds of purchasers, and refreshment to add zest to the buying; and as this part of the affair came to outweigh the sterner side, a "fair" now suggests to most people merely roundabouts and swings, cheap ornaments and rowdy behaviour. The word "tawdry" is a corruption of St. Audrey, whose fair on October 17th, in the Isle of Ely, was noted for a showy and cheap kind of lace. The word "cheap" is from a Saxon word meaning "to buy," and remains in Cheapside, Eastcheap, and in the prefix "Chipping" to several country towns where markets were held (such as Chipping Barnet, Chipping Norton, Chippenham, the last meaning just "Market-Town"). It also survives in the proper name "Chapman," originally a merchant, and shortened now to the familiar "chap," just as "customer" has been shortened to "cuss."

All cases of cheating or violence during a fair were tried and punished then and there at a special court in the market-house. This was called the Court of "Pie Powder," a corruption of "Pied Poudreux," or dusty-foot.

Next to a shrine of some saint, the places most likely to catch people coming together were fords, and, later on, bridges. Moreton-in-the-Marsh has a curious old stone, called "Four Shires' Stone," marking the spot where Warwick, Worcester, Gloucester

and Oxford meet. The market there served all four counties.

In spite of the modern facilities for buying and selling, easy transport, C.O.D., etc., many of the ancient fairs are still held. In old days, the king, or the Church, gained very substantial revenues from the dues charged to the men who sold goods at certain privileged places and times. Streets of booths were formed where strange and unusual wares were exposed for sale, and arranged according to kind, such as pottery, poultry, drapery. *But only for a few days, and the days were sternly fixed.* Now in the survivals of these fairs to-day, however other things change, the dates remain the same as were fixed by ancient statute.

At Barnet, near London, on the Great North Road, the first week in September sees so many caravans of amusement-mongers pouring in, that one is reminded of the despair of Balak. Roundabouts and swings, quack doctors with heal-alls, fat women, and every kind of catchpenny imaginable, are spread out in bewildering profusion. Crowds of sightseers are emptied from trams, buses and trains. No efforts of the inhabitants can stop this yearly orgy, because of the ancient charter. And of course a very useful sale of horses and cattle is going on all the time.

The fair at Winchester was unrivalled in the old days. The royal town was full of merchants from far countries, while the forest round was full of robbers. Theft is the invariable accompaniment of fairs; "here to-day, gone to-morrow" is the idea, and the inhabitants of "fair" towns have to keep the strictest guard on their poultry and such movable goods. Nothing but an Act of Parliament, however, can put a stop to the holding of these fairs with all the inconvenience they

entail. By the way, an Act of Parliament can do anything; it even has the super-godlike power of making what has happened to be as though it had not happened.

The importance of *fixing* the day for a market, or the date for a fair, can readily be seen, when travelling was such a serious undertaking. The market days at Oxford (Wednesday and Saturday) have been fixed for over six hundred years. St. Giles's Fair at Oxford is one of the oldest in the kingdom, and is held for two days in early September, in the "Giler"; and a more incongruous mixture than the roundabouts and the dignified college buildings can hardly be equalled in any country.

St. Bartholomew's Fair in Smithfield was founded as long ago as the reign of Henry II., and was chiefly a cloth fair. The name of one of the narrow alleys near the church is still "Cloth Fair."<sup>1</sup> But "Bartelmy Fair" was abolished in the middle of the nineteenth century, owing to the disgraceful scenes connected with it, just as in the case of Greenwich. Hair-raising tales are told of the wholesale drunkenness, dirt and disorder.

Midsummer Common, in Cambridge, derives its name from the yearly fair, still held there in June. Mayfair, now the most fashionable quarter of London, derived its name from the fair held in May, and was disreputable enough not long ago, when the spring came round. Nottingham is noted for its Goose Fair, Norwich for its Canary Fair, Bampton for its Pony Fair.

At Heathfield, in Sussex, an old witch is supposed to come on fair day (April 14th) and let loose the cuckoos for the year. Hence it is sometimes called "Cuckoo Fair." Sussex has the reputation of being

<sup>1</sup> See page 79.

the first county to hear the cuckoo, as indeed from its position it may well be. Kipling writes:

Old woman's let the cuckoo out  
At Heffle Cuckoo Fair-a.

Heffle being a natural corruption of Heathfield. The arrival of the cuckoo, its song and its habits, are matters to which no Englishman is indifferent, and there is much folk-lore about it. From the west we have:

The Cuckoo is a purty bird, er zings as er vlies,  
Er bringeth good tidings, er telleth no lies.  
Er eateth zweet vlowers, to make er voice clear,  
And when er zings "Cuck-oo," the summer drahs near.

It should be noted that the sex of the singing bird must not be pressed from this rhyme. The use of pronouns is very loose in country districts. It has been said that the Welsh, in struggling with our pronouns, call everything "he" except a tom-cat. The best-known cuckoo lore is contained in the following jingle:

In April, come he will.  
In May, he sings all day.  
In June, he changes his tune.  
In July, he prepares to fly.  
In August, go he must.

To which *Punch* added:

In September, he's gone, remember.  
In October, if you hear him you're not sober.

**Some London Markets.** Early risers may see some characteristics of London life that will be well worth sacrificing a few hours' bed. Covent Garden in its glory is to be seen between three and four in the morning, when comes the arrival of fruit, vegetables and flowers, around the great palace of the market. The men carrying the fruit are a sight in themselves,

poising as many as six bushel-baskets on their heads. They are rough-mannered, no doubt, for it is no light matter to be knocked against when handling valuable loads like this. "Do you know the nature of an oath, my good woman?" asked a police-court magistrate. "Well, your worship, I had oughter," was the reply, "which my 'usband is a Coving Garden porter." A visit here is not only a delight for artists in its wealth of colour, contrasting with the sober greys of streets and buildings, but it may be taken as a pilgrimage for the lovers of old Samuel Johnson, for this was a favourite morning prowling of his.

The name is a corruption of Convent Garden. When London and Westminster were little separate towns, there was a nunnery between them, and this was the nuns' garden. By a curious coincidence, this characteristic has stuck to it, and perhaps a summer's morning in the nuns' garden presented much the same sight as the market does now—banks of roses, lilies, carnations—mingling in a riot of colour and sweet scent. It would be a pity if a change in locality should break the old tradition.

Billingsgate is more of an adventure. Fish may have an artistic side, but they are cold and slippery, especially just before dawn. Fish has been sold here, below London Bridge, for over a thousand years. Trains from Grimsby and Yarmouth discharge their loads of fish, as do ships from the North Sea. And some Dutch boats are always stationed there, because certain privileges have been granted to the Dutch that would be forfeited if the boats were taken away. Auctioneers stand on platforms, selling the fish to bidders, and as they are sold fresh boxes keep arriving—herring, haddock, plaice, cod, skate, in endless pro-

cession. The porters are all provided with a disk and a number, and a padded hat for carrying loads. Their language is even more forcible than that of Covent Garden, and has given us another word for swearing, "Billingsgate."

Smithfield will probably be visited for the sake of the martyrs. If this is done on a Sunday, the place should be visited again on a weekday, in order to see the extraordinary contrast. A policeman with nothing to do, and a cat preening herself in the middle of the road—Sunday. But on a weekday from four in the morning, a throng of clerks and dealers, buyers from the suburbs, porters and van drivers. The huge building of the market is surrounded with vans, waiting to carry off the meat in all directions. The porters wear shoulder-pieces of yellow leather, called "canaries," for cleanliness in carrying the meat. Within the market are long avenues of beef and mutton, bacon and pork, in exquisite cleanliness and order. These may be glimpsed through the gates on a Sunday. The meat from Holland, amid vast quantities from all parts of the world, has a specially high reputation for cleanliness. In former days Smithfield was a cattle market, but the inconvenience of driving cattle into the heart of London led to the transference of this branch to Islington in 1855, then practically a country spot, and Smithfield confined itself to the sale of dead meat.

Some of the meat is brought in vans to the market, but the greater part comes by train, and yet you will not observe anything of train or station, for right under the market is a place scooped out like a cellar, where the railway lines run, and from there the meat is lifted up into the market.

Leadenhall Market is mainly for poultry and game.

A student of modern London life among the "people" would spend a profitable hour in the Caledonian Market. It must be on a *Friday*. Dip anywhere into the Tube, take a ticket to Caledonian Road, and you will be eventually disgorged at the right spot. You will find streams of people making for a large open space, where innumerable stalls are set out, and where everything conceivable is sold: furniture, dress, ironware, china and glass, food of every kind, and all sorts of little things that you did not know you wanted till you saw them. The purchasers carry enormous bags, and stagger away with their loads to fill up the buses and trams.

Something of the same nature may be seen any day of the week in Leather Lane, a narrow street running out of Holborn on the north side, near the Circus. In the lunch hour, about twelve to one, there is a market in this street, where you may pick up the most wonderful bargains if you have a sharp eye for such things. In any case the sight is amusing.

**Some Notes on Weights and Measures.** Some insight into the life of bygone England may be got by studying the origin of our weights and measures. In spite of the obvious advantage of the decimal system, we stick to our old-fashioned ways of reckoning. Perhaps the decimal system is *too* easy. Children at school are often "decimal shy," and seem to place no trust in an answer obtained by juggling with a dot, and prefer any amount of deep-sea work along the more familiar "vulgar" lines.

It was noted in chapter xviii. how the size of cottages depended on the size of the ox. It is supposed,



too, that the widespread use of 220 yards as a measure is due to the fact that this was a convenient length for oxen to pull a plough without stopping; and it therefore became a "furrow-long," or "furlong." A shorter distance was conveniently measured by the long rod, or pole, which was used by the ploughman to stretch out to urge on the front oxen. This was  $5\frac{1}{2}$  yards. Thus, a piece of land a furlong in length and a rod in width was an easily measured amount for reckoning wages for ploughing or other farm work; and this was called a "rood" (another form of the word "rod"). Four of these roods made an average field, and was called an "acre" (Latin "ager"). In the phrase "God's Acre" for a churchyard, we retain the original use of the word "acre" for a field.

Naturally the human body afforded many ready measures which would fit in with one another with slight adaptation. Thus twelve *thumbs*, or inches, equalled one *foot*. The word "inch" is the same as "ounce," and is connected with the Latin "unus," one, and so might be applied to any "unit." An "ell" was the distance from the *elbow* to the finger-tip. A "hand" is used in measuring a horse's height (four inches, taken across the palm). A span, the extreme stretch of the outspread hand, is now used only metaphorically. A "mile" (Latin "mille") was a thousand paces, a pace being the distance between the spot where the right heel left the ground to where it came down again, in marching.

The yard is a very common and convenient measure, especially for dealing with wool. It therefore had to be fixed early in our history. King Henry I. ordered that it should be the length of his own arm. In the Guildhall you can see the length fixed by law.

A "peck" was a small quantity a man could easily carry, or *pick* up. A "pottle," still used in country places, was a little pot, and survives in the proverb, "To look for a needle in a pottle of hay." A "pint" is the same word as "paint," because this quantity was *depicted* on a larger vessel.

The extreme stretch of a man, from finger-tip to finger-tip, when his arms are spread, is about six feet, and this was called an "embrace," or *fathom* (from the Scandinavians, a nautical nation). This is specially used by a sailor in taking soundings. He drops the weighted line overboard till it touches bottom, then he hauls it in with his right hand, passes it to his left, *stretches* out again for another pull, and so on, easily counting the stretches, and singing out the numbers.

Full fathom five thy father lies.

*Tempest*, I. ii.

Under the keel, nine fathom deep . . .

The Spirit slid.

*Ancient Mariner*.

A woman finds a handy measurement of a yard by turning her head to the left, stretching out the right arm, and spreading the ribbon from the tip of her nose to the tip of her finger. All such rough-and-ready methods are well enough, but may be very unfair when it comes to buying and selling. Even the yardstick, so common in country shops, has to be checked now and again, because it becomes shorter from being constantly stood up on the floor. A gross case of unfairness existed years ago, when the uneducated Welsh peasants used to bring their homespun flannel from the outlying districts for the middlemen to buy. These measured it by rolling it round a wooden cylinder:

it will be seen how the quantity of flannel increased as the roll grew bigger, and how easily the peasants were cheated.

Besides unfairness, great inconvenience was caused by a measure varying in different parts. For instance, the primitive weight called a *stone* depended upon a stone kept in the market-house of a town, and might vary from ten to twenty pounds according to the town. This was well enough until goods began to be moved to all parts of the country. Of late years there has been strict legislation and continual inspection of all weights and measures everywhere.

In the market-house there was also kept a balance, called the "king's beam," and the greatest care was taken that no sales should be transacted without its use, outside the town, or in any way secretly. Even now, in the City of London, a sale in the back room of a shop is not on the same legal footing as if conducted in the main shop; it is said to be not in "market overt." In Mayfair there is a house called the "King's Weigh House" (not to be confused with the street "Kingsway"). This was originally the weighing house at Billingsgate Market, used later on as a Nonconformist chapel. When the site had to be sold, the chapel was moved to Mayfair, but retained its old name.

The word "sterling" has a curious origin. The merchants of the Hanseatic League in the Middle Ages had their headquarters in London in a dwelling called the "Steelyard," with warehouse, wharf, garden, and encircling wall, keeping everything private and secret, like a trade monastery. The merchants belonging to this who traded in the East were called "Easterlings," and the corruption of this word to "sterling" came to mean "valuable," "of genuine

worth," so that we apply it metaphorically as a great compliment. The English *penny* was known as the "esterling," and 240 pennies made a pound of "esterlings," or one pound sterling.

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## CHAPTER XXIV

### THE WORLD'S WORST GRUMBLER

O fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint,  
Agricolas! (Virgil. Geor. II. 456.)

AMONG the familiar figures in England, the farmer is so important that he must be treated separately. He is the backbone of the country. In spite of all our manufactures, farming of some kind or another is still our chief industry. Beside corn and cattle, there are fruit farms, vegetable farms, poultry farms, and so on. No matter where you happen to be in England, a country walk will bring you to a farm of some kind. You can wander into field or yard and see what is going on. And there is always something going on, no matter what the time of year: ploughing, harrowing, sowing, manuring, cutting, binding, carrying, threshing, hay-making, stack-building—as well as the endless work with horses, cows, pigs, turkeys, geese, and other livestock. Something you are sure to see if you poke about quietly, do not mind mud, and do not wait to be invited. The farmer is not overflowing with bonhomie; he is in an irritable frame of mind; the weather, whatever it is, is sure to be ruining something; you, whoever you are, know nothing about farming nor about the difficulties he has to contend with; he has touched bottom in bad luck. . . His capacity for

grumbling excites comment even in a nation of grumblers. One perfect year we had, somewhere in the nineties, when corn and hay, and even apples, all gave bumper crops. But the farmer rose splendidly to the occasion; he complained that there was no *poor* milk to give the pigs, and that the mushrooms were not so good as usual. Since then Nature seems to have given up trying to please him.

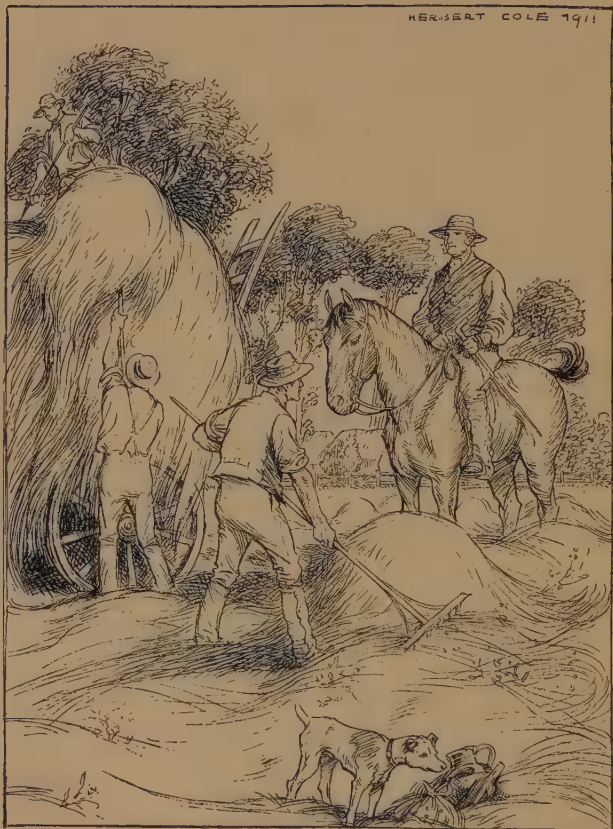
It is on the farms that our sturdiest manhood is reared, so that our statesmen are anxious to keep our farming industry in a healthy and paying condition, and every effort is made to check the flow of young people to the towns. It may easily be seen that our country villages, however beautiful to the artistic eye, are free from the fiercer excitements, and it is the dullness of the life rather than poor wages and housing that drives people to the town. Village institutes, wireless, cinemas, and suchlike alleviations for dark winter evenings, will doubtless help the problem. But there are greater difficulties about the whole agricultural question that tax the powers of our statesmen. It is true that we get flour and meat from our colonies, but even the colonies admit that there is none of either to touch the quality of the home produce. The fundamental difficulty is the question of land tenure. Our large landowners are not farmers. Now it is obvious that the best value is obtained from a piece of land when the man who farms it is also the owner. Improvement, therefore, seems to lie in the direction of the large landowners taking to farming, or of small farmers buying pieces of land. In an old country like England, the varying and often clashing interests and ancient rights complicate the question in a way that anyone from the colonies can hardly realise.

But if England gives up her great agricultural work, and lets her countryside become a mere museum of interesting historical remains, even those remains will become dull and lifeless, as all museums tend to become, and even red revolution would be preferable.

Dorset, which "turns its back to the sea," is generally thought of as the agricultural county *par excellence*, and it is the Dorset farm labourer who is referred to as "Hodge," implying a sturdy, ill-lettered man, whose ideas seldom stray beyond his day's work. Here you may still find the farmer who has been the mainstay of England for many centuries. He is absolute monarch on his farm, as a captain is on his ship. He rides about on a horse or cob, inspecting everything. He knows what each cow should be yielding, which horse is going lame, when calves are due, the exact work that every farm "hand" ought to be about, the promise of each crop, and that the weather will soon change for the worse, as "the glass is going down." He treats his men well, and is kindness itself if their people are ill. But he gets every ounce of work out of them—always.

The time to see a farm at its best is the harvest. The weather is so uncertain that fine days must be seized, and used at top speed. Everything else is dropped and all hands are commandeered. Casual labour is obtained; women, boys and girls, and of course the farmer himself—all join in getting the hay or the corn in. Although the work is hard, beginning at dawn if necessary and going on till after sunset, it is done in a spirit of goodwill and even jollity. The meals taken in the field are plentiful, and there is always a liberal allowance of small beer or cider. When the crops are in, there is a kind of festival supper, with speeches and singing, often including hymns.

HERBERT COLE 1911



HAYMAKING



A farmer's pride in his fields and stock is a kind of folio edition of the average Englishman's pride in his garden. My grandfather, who had a farm much farther west than Dorset, used to boast that everything on his dinner-table was produced on the estate. Butter, cream, cheese, poultry, eggs—these of course. But bacon and ham were cured at home in great stone brine-baths. Beef and mutton came from the farm. Corn was grown, and ground in the water-mill down the lane. Water was fetched from a little spring in the hamlet, where of course there was a smithy. Fruit and vegetables were in profusion. Beer was brewed at home. I think, however, he forgot about the sugar, pepper and salt.

Another harvest that requires a large number of workers for a short time is the crop of hops in Kent. Crowds of Londoners of no very settled occupation make a yearly jaunt down to the hop-fields, and lead a kind of open-air gipsy life while the harvest lasts, much to the joy of the London children who get in this way their chief knowledge of the country. Much has been done in recent years to improve the conditions of these "hoppers," both bodily and spiritually.

Our churches are not generally well attended, but at a harvest festival, which is not a Church feast at all, but quite a pagan affair, there is always a full and hearty congregation. Fruit and flowers, loaves of bread and vegetable marrows, are placed about the pulpit, windows, font and altar-rails. An old-fashioned Norfolk farmer was rather shocked when the new vicar instituted a harvest festival. When he was asked how he liked the decorations, he said he thought they looked Popish. Anything that an Englishman dislikes or does not understand in religious procedure he generally ascribes to the Pope.

In Cornwall, on these occasions, it used to be a custom to place three bowls on the altar, containing potatoes, pilchards and tin, as representing the county's peculiar harvests.

Students of history are usually interested in the method of land tenure among the Saxons. The estate of Earl Manvers, at Laxton (Notts), of about 900 acres, is still run on the Saxon plan. It is divided into three large fields, each subdivided into some 400 plots. The fields are cropped in rotation—one wheat, one spring crops, one fallow. A "field jury" of twelve sees that no encroachments are made, and settles legal details. It is at best a clumsy system, but the tenants are used to it and feel no drawbacks. Progress, however, progresses so fast, that this estate had better be seen quite soon or it may be improved, and useless for historical purposes. Some authorities hold that this system is more ancient than Saxon times, and that the furrow-long or furlong (220 yards) dates back some two thousand years, to the Greek "stadion," and has been preserved in our cricket pitch, for twenty-two yards was the breadth between the "balks" marking off the "acres." This was probably a handy place for the game. The measurement will be preserved in the game, no doubt, for a few more thousand years. It may be noted in this connection that our common foot-race of a quarter-mile is just the old furrow length and back (440 yards). Our measurements, as well as those of Greece and Rome, may originally be due to the size of an ox (see chapter xviii.).

#### BOOK

*Our England*, by P. Johnson (Methuen). For young readers.

## CHAPTER XXV

### WOOL AND COTTON

KING EDWARD III. had a golden coin, worth six shillings and eightpence, with a figure of himself in a ship, as the conqueror at Sluys. Someone remarked to him that he ought to have a *sheep* on his coins rather than a ship. In his reign our greatest wealth came from our wool. Although there were many weavers in England, the bulk of our wool had been sent to Flanders to be woven into cloth, because the Flemish could do it better. Shortly after Edward's accession, hundreds of Flemings had been banished, for political reasons, from their own country. Edward seized the golden chance and invited them to England, with liberal promises of freedom to live and work and sell their cloth. We were thus enabled to watch them at work and learn to do the same ourselves. Soon Edward forbade all but the wealthy to wear *imported* cloth. Then he so arranged the duties that it would pay better to export cloth than the raw wool. These measures laid the foundation of our great woollen industry. The State insisted on a good quality and also on a standard length and breadth, thus making the wool a "staple" trade. Many towns had a central market, where the peasants had to bring in for sale the cloth that they had woven in their homes. There is an ancient "Wool House" still standing at Southampton. The word "staple" merely means "fixed," and

was often applied to a town or port that was privileged to deal in wool. All these strict regulations were made not so much from enthusiasm for good workmanship, as for the sake of collecting revenue. Edward III. may well be regarded as the founder of our wool trade. The controllers of the wool trade were called "Merchants of the Staple." Later on, when other goods were controlled in the same way, they were called "staple commodities." The word remains in several towns, such as Dunstable, Stapleford, Staple Inn, Staple Street.

Spinning was done in nearly every home, because there was never enough yarn to supply the looms. Hence every woman was a spinster, although the name naturally fell to the unmarried woman who, poor soul, did nothing but spin. The life of a weaver is very vividly given in George Eliot's *Silas Marner*. Much had to be done to the cloth after it was woven. Men called "fullers" or "walkers" (whence the common surnames) stamped on the cloth when it was wet from being washed, so as to thicken it. Then it was stretched on tenterhooks to dry (hence our metaphor, "to be on tenterhooks"). These are only a few of the many processes that a piece of cloth must go through. Machinery quickens the rate, and leaves a more even effect, but all the processes have to be done, and some of them still by hand. Anyone interested in cloth finishing should go into Ormond Yard, a turning to the east out of Southampton Row, and there (No. 43) will be found a large building devoted to the finishing touches in this trade.

So much did England feel that she owed to wool that she sat her Lord Chancellor on a sack of it, as the most honourable seat possible. The "Woolsack"

in the House of Lords is the goal at which every lawyer aims.

Prosperity in one trade is sure to bring, just at first, some hardship in others. The demand for wool led to increase of sheep-rearing; this led to the turning of arable land into pasture. Since one man can watch many sheep, a large number of farm labourers were thrown out of work, and we had the beginning of the great struggle between agriculture and manufacture, that seems endless.

Again, the prosperity of certain localities waxes and wanes, sometimes owing to sheer accident, and sometimes to the supply of natural products. Merely because it lay nearest to the Netherlands, and was a quick refuge for Flemish refugees, East Anglia became the great centre of our woollen manufacture. At one time Norwich was an important port, and the second city in the kingdom. But soon Yorkshire woke up to the fact that the long wool of her sheep excelled the wool of Norfolk, and that she must learn to do her own weaving instead of paying dues to send her wool to Norfolk to be turned into cloth. Then later, when machinery took the place of hand-work, Yorkshire with her coal- and iron-fields easily became the centre of the trade. Leeds sprang into being as the chief town, and Hull as the chief port, for wool. A fine picture poster may be seen in any L.N.E.R. station, of Hull as the "WOOL GATE."

From the lighthouse of Happisburgh ("Hasbro"), a fishing-village in the north of Norfolk, can be seen thirty-nine churches—large churches with great square towers, far too large for the villages to which they belong. What have they to do with wool? Everything. They are a survival of the time when Norfolk was

humming with looms, and with religion. For its wool-workers were under the influence of the Flemings who had suffered for their religion, and therefore cared about it, and filled their churches, and required large ones. The towns have sunk into mere villages, but the churches are there, giving us a rather pathetic bit of history.

On the other side of England is a similar case. The Cotswold Hills have been famed for a hardy and fleecy breed of sheep since the fifteenth century. Many of the Flemings were attracted into Gloucestershire to set up their looms, and traces of them are still evident both in proper names and in a certain austerity of religious life. Here, as in Norfolk, will be found evidence of former prosperity. The wool trade was at its zenith there in the early part of the nineteenth century, before the rise of the great towns in the north. The grand stone houses of Broadway, and throughout the whole district of the Cotswolds, the arched doorways, the oriel windows with leaded lights, the ornamented gables, fine ironwork in hinges and latches—all speak of the wealth of their builders.

The village of Worstead in Norfolk is interesting as having given its name to a kind of woollen yarn—worsted. The place was a settlement of the Flemish weavers as far back as the twelfth century, and the church is a fine building of the fourteenth century. In its parish records the words “Licence arrived in time” frequently occur. This has reference to a decree that was passed long ago, to further the local industry. Everyone in the parish was obliged to be buried in a worsted shroud, unless a licence costing a good round sum were obtained.

COTTON. Incredible as it may seem, we were forbidden to wear cotton in 1720. The "new draperies" were becoming a rival to the woollen industry, and were discouraged. However, as so often happens, extermination agreed with the healthy young plant, and here we are with cotton as one of our leading industries, and everybody using it in some form or other. And indeed it seems nothing short of a Proteus in the number of forms it can assume. The freedom from the greedy restrictions that attached to the older industry enabled the cotton weavers to go ahead very fast. The mere chance that took them first to Lancashire turned out so fortunate that the factories have always been there. The damp climate, which assists the manipulation of the cotton fibre; the water power obtained from the mountain streams, later on the power from the coal-fields; the convenience of the ports for getting the raw material from America—are all factors in making the region the most appropriate in the kingdom.

The various cotton towns in South Lancashire specialise in their work, some in spinning chiefly (such as Oldham, Bolton and Rochdale), others in weaving (such as Bury, Blackburn, Burnley and Preston), others in dyeing, etc. Manchester at the head is so identified with cotton, that we speak of a cotton town in another country as the "Manchester" of the place.

The history of cotton, although comparatively recent in England, has to be pushed to China, India and Central Africa for its origin and development. The very word "calico" is from the Hindoo Calicut. But its entrance to this country was gradual, tentative and painful. At first the cotton was not considered strong

enough by itself, and was mixed with linen. In the tiny cottages which were our first factories, the weaver provided his own *warp* of linen yarn, and was provided with cotton wool for his *weft*. The great improvements and inventions that were made in the eighteenth century (culminating in our giant machines of to-day) were pushed on by a serious difficulty. The supply of raw material from the Manchester dealers was greater than the peasants could cope with at their slow pace. The looms were being worked at a loss. This situation always sharpens the wits, and we had a series of ingenious plans for getting bigger output with the same labour. In 1770 an ordinary spinning-wheel was upset on the floor, and Hargreaves noticed that it went on spinning by itself for a bit. This accident, which would have passed unnoticed in more prosperous times, suggested the idea of the famous "spinning-jenny," so named after Hargreaves's wife. Another idea was suggested by a man's noticing how his wife economised labour by managing to spin and rock the cradle with the same action. Sir Richard Arkwright is the best known of the inventors. While Hargreaves's jenny (1767) had enabled the workers to increase their output some thirty-fold, the thread was still not strong enough to be used without the admixture of linen for the warp. Now Arkwright's "frame" (a year or two later) enabled *cotton warp* to be spun of sufficient fineness and strength, and this revolutionised the manufacture, and set cotton on its own feet. The life of this man is as full of adventure as any novel. From the days of dire poverty as a barber, when he tried to attract customers by shaving them for a halfpenny, till his early death all in the midst of his manufactures in 1792, it was a constant fight either with poverty



or ill-health or malevolence. It was while he was a barber that he turned his thoughts to improvements in spinning, because he heard his customers complaining, while he was cutting their hair, that they could not get enough yarn to keep their looms working all the week. The peasants treated all the new inventions with suspicion and hatred, mobbed the inventor's house, and destroyed every machine they could lay hands on. It is needless to ask the reason for this. Far harder to account for was the opposition of the manufacturers. A powerful combination was formed against him. They refused to buy his yarn. A large factory of his, near Chorley in Lancashire, was destroyed by a mob, in the presence of a large body of civil and military authorities, without a hand being raised to stop the outrage. The combination, too, opposed the reduction of duties on calicoes. However, all the efforts to crush Arkwright failed, and an Act of Parliament was obtained to encourage the "*lately* introduced" fabrics, as a "lawful and laudable manufacture." It is very characteristic of England that Arkwright was knighted, not on account of his inventions, but on the occasion of presenting an address, as High Sheriff of Derby, congratulating George III. on the failure of Margaret Nicholson to assassinate him. As a certain noble Englishman said of his title, "There was no dashed merit about it."





## CHAPTER XXVI

### COAL

IF a sheep and a woolsack symbolised England's strength in the time of the Plantagenets, and an oak-tree might have done so in later centuries, a lump of coal would be the appropriate thing to-day. Our machinery, gas engines, electrical engines, our ships, all depend on coal. If there is a coal strike, English industries are strangled. In the future there may be something else, but at present it is a coal age.

In order to understand England on her seamy side as well as on her beautiful side, the "Black Country" ought to be visited and, if possible, a colliery seen from within. There are plenty to choose from. Unfortunately there is a likelihood of one being found quite near London, so that one of the loveliest parts of Kent may be turned into a black country. But if you draw a line across the map from Hull in Yorkshire to Frome in Somerset, you will find practically all the coal-fields lying to west of it. The South Wales field is the largest, and the most readily accessible from London.

At the time of the Industrial Revolution in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, when the new machinery was making huge demands for coal, there was a rush of workers to the mines. The conditions of their life were deplorable. Streets of wretched little houses sprang up to "accommodate" them. Although food and money were plentiful, the women could neither cook nor keep their homes in common decency; most of them went to work in the mines and, when labour was scarce, little children as young as five, and in some cases four, were sent down to work. The children's hours were as long as the adults', and meals were eaten amidst the coal-dust and dirt. They slept in relays in beds that were never cold. Pauper children were sent to the mines and no further inquiries were made about them; they were even known to be turned adrift on the road, when work for them was no longer available. Such horror was created by the Report of 1842, that women and children were excluded from the mines. The well-known picture of a half-naked girl on all-fours drawing a loaded truck has bitten itself deep into the conscience of the nation.

Subsequent Factory Acts have stopped some of the worst conditions—to name only the Eight Hours Act, forbidding a man to remain underground longer than eight hours at a stretch. Not always popular, these measures, for when a man is paid by his output he would often prefer to stay down longer to make up for time unavoidably lost in getting to his job, waiting for clearances and so on. No Acts of Parliament, however, can mitigate all the dangers of the life, in spite of the utmost forethought and vigilance. No man is allowed to carry a tool in the cage, lest he should drop it and kill someone below. Manholes, or refuge

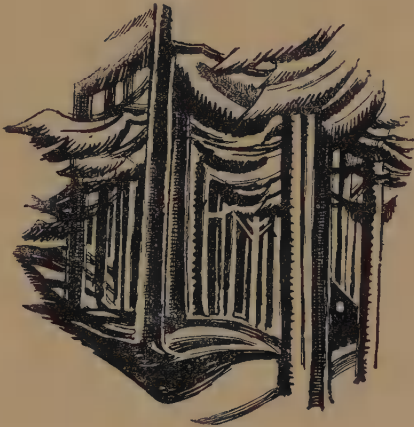
holes, are provided along the tram lines, just as in a railway tunnel. Propping and timbering go on as the coal is worked, to prevent the roof from falling in, and great skill is required in placing these props well and renewing them. Even so, a miner is expected to test his roof by tapping it before he begins his work.

Ventilation is almost more important than timbering. This is provided for by a double shaft. Gases escape as the coal is worked; some are poisonous, others are explosive, and after an explosion comes the worst of all—"after-damp." The men cannot smell or see the effects of this at once, but become tired and heavy, and then helpless. Even the safety-lamp (invented by Sir Humphry Davy in 1815) does not give any warning. Floods are another frequent danger that no precautions can prevent.

But the greatest danger of all lies in the recklessness of the men. In spite of rules and cautions and frequent accidents, they take the risk, and get hardened to the idea of danger. "Oh, I needn't bother to tap the roof, it's sure to be all right." Then suddenly we hear of men being buried or crushed. A man is careless with his lamp, and all England is horrified with the news, "Terrible Explosion in a Colliery." The courage of these men and the unselfishness of the rescuers are past belief. Sometimes their very gallantry undoes them, for they rush forward to save and are themselves swamped, crushed or gassed. In the case of "after-damp," a leader should go ahead very cautiously, seeing that the ventilation shaft is not blocked up, and holding in front of him a canary or small animal, because these feel the effects of the poison before human beings. Sometimes men have been imprisoned for days by a flood, without food or light, before their fellows

have been able to locate them and dig down to them. On such an occasion recently one man kept up the spirits of the rest by telling them stories. Of course a hospital, doctors and nurses are immediately available, and a pit manager can usually set a limb himself in an emergency.

English people grumble at the quality of the coal they get, at its price, at the threat of a coal strike, at the ugliness of the Black Country—but there is nothing that so stirs the nation to its depth as the heroism of these men who face death every moment, and willingly give their lives for one another.





## CHAPTER XXVII

### SOME OF OUR FAUNA

WHEN Dr. Johnson tried to be disagreeable by saying that oats were the food of horses in England, and of men in Scotland, Boswell replied, "Yes! And where can you find such horses and such men!" If one were asked to name the thing that was most likely to interest any given Englishman, the horse would at once suggest itself. And this in spite of the immense competition of the motor-car. The horse is being slowly but surely ousted from the streets, and even, in many up-to-date farms, from agricultural work; but as long as hunting and racing last, he will be the country's darling.

Horses of some kind were here when Julius Cæsar came, and improvement in the breeds has gone on ever since. The most notable change was brought in by the Darley Arabian in Queen Anne's reign, and from this bay Arab most of our racehorses are descended. The most famous was "Eclipse," who won his first race when five years old, at Epsom in 1769. His owner declared that the result of the race would be "Eclipse first. The rest nowhere." And lo! it was so. He was a chestnut, with a white blaze down his face, and his off hind leg white from the hock down. He ran in eighteen races and was never beaten. A horse-race should be seen by anyone who wishes to study the character of the English, and there are plenty to be seen, either steeplechase or flat race, all the year round.



THE MEET

The season for hunting is the winter, beginning on 1 November, and nothing interferes with it except a frost. A meet is one of the most attractive sights imaginable, for it generally is fixed for some interesting country spot, and the members of the hunt are in the glow of health and spirits, well mounted, and all agog for the king of sports, not to mention the hounds; and the pink coats add a jolly note of colour to the grey winter landscape. A winter walk with a meet in view is a real delight; but be prepared for much mud, climbing, scrambling and running.

For hunting enthusiasts the whole year is full of work, in connection with feeding and training the hounds and the hunters, as a week's stay in a hunting district would amply show. Indeed a very fair proportion of our population, from the lowest to the highest, spends its entire energy on doing something with a horse, and if betting be included, the proportion becomes enormous.

Even those who know little of hunting have sung the song *John Peel*, and may like to know something of the man and his surroundings. His hunting district was Blencathra in Cumberland. He lived to the age of seventy-eight and, happily enough, was killed by a hunting accident. Several of his grandchildren are alive now. A recent life of him (*John Peel*, by Hugh Machell) settles the vexed question about his coat. Apparently it was *grey*, not *gay*, for it was made of coarse homespun, but the song seems to require "gay," and thus it will always be sung. This book also gives us a description of the hounds, Ruby, Ranter, Bellman and Royal. The song was written by John Graves, and the music adapted by William Metcalfe from two old Scottish tunes.



A list of all forthcoming meets is given in *The Times*, so that if you wish to be present at one, you have only to look at the list under the *county* in which you happen to be, and note the exact place and hour.

But you may be confined to London, where nowadays horses are few and far between. Some specially beautiful specimens are still to be seen, the more pleasant because the others have gone. The scarlet Guards in Whitehall, and all mounted policemen, are on animals that are groomed to perfection, and seem almost human in their intelligence. The horses at the "Fire Brigade" station used to be one of the sights of London, as they stood in their stables with the harness hanging over them, ready to dash out at the first sound of the fire signal. The motor is of course more efficient, and sentiment must not intrude in cases of life and death. One may, however, be permitted to regret the hansom cab, the "gondola of London." When Venice replaces her boats with motor-launches, the older inhabitants will understand what Londoners missed when the hansom went.

England's love for the horse is expressed in a memorial at St. Jude's-on-the-Hill, Golders Green. It consists of a bronze horse on a pedestal, with the following inscription:

In grateful and reverent memory of the Empire's Horses (some 375,000) who fell in the Great War (1914-1918). Most obediently and often most painfully they died. Faithful unto Death. Not one of them is forgotten before God.

A word must be said for our ponies. The reason why they are the best in the world is the foundation laid by the herds of wild ponies in the New Forest, Exmoor, Dartmoor, and the Welsh hills. Their docility and hardiness make them peculiarly good for

the breeding of polo ponies. A delightful destiny for them is polo. Unfortunately their good qualities make them equally useful for work in the mines, and the change from the wild life of the forest or moor, to the narrow dark passages of a colliery, where they go blind, is what no lover of horses can bear to think about. There is a movement now on foot to provide periodical holidays for them.

But in polo we have a sport that is almost perfect, for the animals seem to enjoy it as much as the riders. A white ball has to be driven into a goal, by means of long sticks, by the riders. Now the ponies have to career after the ball, to give the riders a chance to reach it. The riders have to be so skilled in mere riding that they can forget all about it and think only of hitting the ball; and the ponies show their skill in dashing up to the exact position necessary for a hit. The game affords a very pretty sight, as well as a severe contest, but it is too expensive an affair to be an object for common observation.

We take a pride, too, in the humbler animals and their efficiency. There is a show of cart-horses in London at Regent's Park on 1 May, and a similar one of dock-horses in Liverpool. Horse fairs are held continually in various parts of the country, and more ambitious shows at Richmond, and at the Agricultural Hall, Islington.

The costermonger's donkey is quite a national institution. Every summer there is a competition for the best donkey, at a show that used to be held in the East End, but is now presided over by a duchess in the West End. There is a cup awarded, as well as a money prize and a joint of meat, for the best donkey; and another cup is awarded for the best-cared-for feet.

The name "costermonger" is very appropriate. "Coster" is an old word for "apple," as this was the chief commodity in early days on the street barrows. "Monger" means a "mingler," or a trader of mixed goods (compare "ironmonger"), so that it well fits the modern pusher of a barrow, loaded with oranges, bananas, grapes and plums. Do not hesitate to buy from these barrows, as the fruit is always the kind that is plentiful and cheap at the moment, taken from the surplus quantities that have poured into Covent Garden in the morning. Londoners of the humbler classes are very critical of their food, and it would be no use to expose stale fruit for sale; you are much more likely to be served with stale goods in a "respectable" shop, with high prices and few customers.

In spite of the increase of motor-cars, you may still see in country places the "dog-cart" so familiar half a century ago. Now the original dog-carts were really *dog* carts. They were about three feet long, two wide and one deep. The dogs, usually of the bulldog breed, were harnessed either in pairs or tandem, while the owner walked at the side, pushing uphill, and pulling downhill. The goods that were carried could be left in safety outside the inn, or wherever the owner had to stop, since the dogs acted as policemen. Cruelty in some cases in overworking the dogs led to the suppression of the custom by an Act in 1854.

To observe a fine piece of dog intelligence, get almost any farmer anywhere to let you see his dog bringing in the cows, or rounding up the sheep. There are plenty of dog shows, as there are horse shows, but nothing in the way of fine specimens and elegant breeds can equal for interest the sight of one of our old English "bobs" at his own peculiar business.

There is an International Sheep-dog Society, which holds annual sheep-dog trials, where prizes are awarded for the most intelligent work in gathering and penning the sheep. York and Carlisle are keen rivals for the honour of being considered the "centre" of English sheep-dog work.

A pleasant glimpse of English love for animals can be got by a visit to 1 Hugh Street, Pimlico, where there is a hospital for animals, maintained by "Our Dumb Friends' League." Here you may see a coster bringing his donkey with a broken knee, or perhaps a little boy crying and clutching a sick puppy. They have the animals attended free, or pay just what they can afford. Anyone can walk in and see over the place between three and five p.m., but of course the hospital is open for "cases" always.

In the quiet reaches of our rivers, and in the ornamental waters of private parks, the stately and reserved *swan* lends an added charm to the scene. Its aristocratic air is due to its being a "royal bird." In old days no one could possess a swan without permission from the king, and great care was taken by the royal swanherd that every swan in the kingdom should bear a special mark of ownership on its bill. Every year, in late July or August, there is an expedition on the River Thames, to take up the young birds and mark them. This is called "swan-udding." The name of an inn—"The Swan with Two Necks"—should really be, "The Swan with Two Nicks" (referring to the swan mark).

The young bird is called a "cygnet," an illustration of the way in which French or Norman-French words were used for the dressed meat on the table, while the Saxon word was used for the live animal or bird (as

it was tended by the conquered race). The flesh of the *young* swan was used for the table, so that the French name has remained with the young bird. Until fairly recent times they were fattened for the market, as at the swan-tip at Norwich.

## BOOKS.

*Name this Flower*, by G. Bonnier (Dent).

*British Flora*, by G. Bonnier (Dent).

*Adventures among Birds*, by W. H. Hudson (Dent).

*Birds in Town & Village*, by W. H. Hudson (Dent).

*Hind in Richmond Park*, by W. H. Hudson (Dent).

*Lost British Birds*, by W. H. Hudson (Dent).





## CHAPTER XXVIII

### THE SEA

MUCH irritation is no doubt caused by such songs as *Rule Britannia*, but our neighbours must admit that we have mastered the sea and its ways as no other nation has. The very scantiest account of England must put in a word about the sea. The navy must be taken for granted, as it is too big a subject to summarise. A man-of-war is too complicated for description, while new designs and inventions make any description out of date almost as soon as written. Again, if we turn to the ocean liners, the floating hotels so extensively advertised, running like trains to scheduled time, we find only the usual dullness of the comfortable life.

For something more characteristically English, we must look at the long line of merchant adventurers that have scoured the seas since Elizabethan times. The modern word for them, "tramp," is not so derogatory as it sounds. It is a good English word for walking steadily, not loitering or sauntering. These smaller trading vessels do not keep to the fixed rules of

route and time of the liners, and herein lies their strength. They will go into any sea at any time, with any cargo, just as occasion needs. They will load up with coal, and return with wheat or any other of the thousand commodities we now regard as part of our daily life. The secret of economy in shipping is to keep the vessel always on the go, always carrying something. Now, in order to do this, the tramps have nosed their way into every corner of the globe touched by the sea, joining country to country, taking and getting ideas, spreading friendly relations with all.

From this it can be imagined what nicety of judgment, what quickness of decision, is required for selecting profitable cargoes and the best ports, what skill in seamanship along uncharted routes, what endurance of strange climates, lack of food, storms and disasters of every kind. When we reflect that these tramps are so many in number that there is practically always one in sight, voyage where you may, we realise what a large part of English life they stand for, and how infinitely valuable in time of war, as well as in peace, has been this fund of skill and pluck.

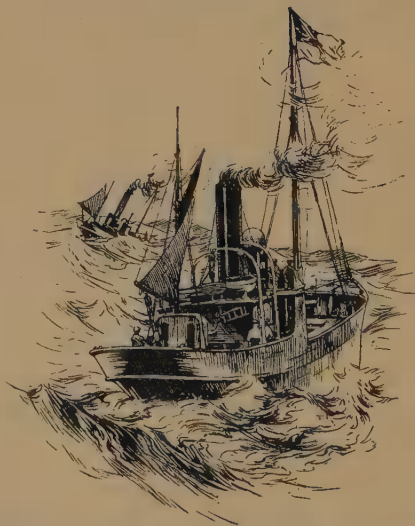
Dirty British coaster, with a salt-caked smoke-stack,  
Butting through the Channel in the mad March days,  
With a cargo of Tyne coal,  
Road-rail, pig-lead.  
Firewood, iron-ware, and cheap tin trays.

The poems of Masfield, and also in a different way those of C. Fox-Smith, have caught the spirit of the English love of the sea, and of the English sailor. But it is a foreigner curiously enough, to whom we owe the finest expression of it in prose. Conrad, in almost any one of his novels, makes you feel that you understand all about a ship, and a man's love for her, without

knowing a single technical term. And it is an American, Herman Melville, who has been called "the master of all sea-writers," for his whaling epic, *Moby Dick*.

Our greatest English painter, Turner, has immortalised for us both the oak battleship of Nelson's time, and the little busy steam-tug of the River Thames. Slip into the National Gallery in Trafalgar Square, and sit down for a few minutes opposite the "Fighting Téméraire" and let the spirit of the thing do its work. Words are no help, unless perhaps Newbolt's:

Now she's fading down the river,  
"Téméraire," "Téméraire."  
Now the sunset breezes shiver,  
"Téméraire," "Téméraire."  
But in England's song for ever  
She's the "Fighting Téméraire."



Britain is now ringed round with LIGHTHOUSES. The story of the lighthouse is as romantic in its way



as that of the tramp steamer. In the days of Henry VIII. the Trinity House was incorporated. This was a fraternity for mutual aid to seamen, and consisted of "The Master, Wardens and Assistants of the Guild Fraternity of the most glorious and undividable Trinity." Queen Elizabeth granted them the privileges of "ballastage," "beaconage" and "buoyage." The *beacons* were for many years no more than fires in an iron basket, recalled by such names as Flam-borough (Flame-town) and Furness (Fireness).

The chief terror to mariners coming up the Channel was a cluster of rocks, fourteen miles off Plymouth, catching with whirls and eddies the swell from the Atlantic and the Bay of Biscay. These rocks, called the Eddystone, are covered at high tide, and even in calm weather the force of the waves against them is terrific.

In 1696 the Trinity resolved to build a lighthouse on this rock, and engaged a certain Mr. Winstanley to carry out the work. He was a curious character, with a reputation for making strange contrivances. In his country home a visitor would suddenly find himself imprisoned in his chair, or on stepping into a garden summer-house, would find himself afloat on a stream, or on putting his foot into a bedroom slipper, would see a ghost arise.

However, the lighthouse taxed all his ingenuity. The main difficulty was getting to and fro, since this was only possible in summer-time, in fair weather, in daylight, and during low tide—that is, a few hours for a few months, and not every day even so. In four years it was finished, and looked something like a Chinese pagoda. The sea dashed some hundred feet above the lantern; but it answered its purpose until 1703, when it showed signs of needing repair.

Winstanley himself came down to superintend the work. All his friends rallied round, and gave him advice, warned him from the task, prophesied that the whole thing would be blown down. All he said was, "I am very well assured of the strength of the building. I only wish there would come the greatest storm that ever blew under the face of the heavens, that I may see what effect it will have on the structure." Well, he saw. A storm arose on 26 November which blew away Winstanley and all his men, and every vestige of the lighthouse save a few bits of iron. A more glorious death it would be hard to picture.

This gave pause to the project for a time. But in a year or two a big West Indiaman was wrecked on the rock. So in 1706 a new attempt was made by a man named Rudyerd. He selected oak as his main material, and made a plain column, twenty-three feet in diameter at base and fourteen at top. In addition to the above-mentioned difficulties, the workmen ran another risk. At one time they were all made prisoners and carried off by the French. But Louis XIV. showed himself the "grand monarch" at all events on this occasion, for he released them because their work was for the good of all nations.

This good old oak might be standing yet, but for another enemy. The "light" consisted of candles, and through some accident to them, the top story caught fire, and the three keepers had to descend story by story as the fire spread. When rescue came at last they were found huddled in a cavity of the rock. As soon as they reached shore, one of them fled in panic, and was never heard of again. Another (an old man of *ninety-four*) was in great pain, owing, so he said, to some molten lead having run down his throat

as he looked up at the burning lantern. Of course he was not believed, but he died in a few days, and seven ounces of lead were found in his stomach.

This happened in 1755, so it was evident that if a house would stand fifty years, the feat was not an impossible one. Smeaton, called the "father of lighthouses," undertook the next attempt. He avoided oak as material, but chose the *shape* of the oak-tree as the best for resistance—broad at the base, and curving gradually inwards. He made a little model, three feet high, for George III. to inspect, and it became a popular attraction for all classes to come and see. The new house was to be entirely of stone. Everyone said it would lack elasticity, it would not bend to the sea, it was tempting Providence. Smeaton's answer was, "If the building won't give way to the sea, well then, the sea must give way to the building."

While the work was going on, the Seven Years' War was raging, and the workmen had to be protected, not from the French this time, but from our own press gang, who would have carried them off to serve in the navy, if they had not been given medals, specially struck, to show the officers that they were exempted. In October 1759 the light of the twelve candles was first exhibited. A terrible storm in 1762 tested the house and found it absolutely defiant of wind and wave. However, in 1878 Sir James Douglass considered it unsafe. The upper part was removed to Plymouth Hoe and erected as a landmark, and the base remains, forty yards from the lighthouse erected by Douglass.

A word must be added about the people whose duty it is to attend to the light. Imagination can suggest some of the trials and dangers. Winstanley and his party were imprisoned by weather at the very start

of his new lighthouse, in November 1698, and were almost at death's door for want of provisions. In Rudyerd's lighthouse two keepers were stationed, with instructions to hoist a flag if help were needed. One was taken ill and died. The other raised the signal, but for four weeks no boat could approach on account of the weather. The poor chap kept the body all this time, lest he should be suspected of foul play. After that there were always three keepers. It was said of two keepers that once they did not speak to each other for a whole month. Human nature seems much the same whatever the circumstances.

Grace Darling, who is a children's heroine, was the daughter of the keeper in the lighthouse off St. Abb's Head. In 1838, she heard shrieks from a wreck, and insisted on pulling out in their small boat, to see if help could be given, in spite of her father's protests. However, he consented to go, and while he managed to land on the rock and reach the wreck, Grace kept the boat close up, although a tremendous sea was running. The nine survivors were all landed safely in the lighthouse, where Grace nursed them for two days until the storm abated sufficiently for them to be taken to the mainland. Her name has never been forgotten, and her grave may be seen in the village churchyard at Bamborough. A mid-Victorian penny had a lighthouse opposite a ship, by the figure of Britannia, reflecting the nation's pride in both.

In our rough island story there are one or two dark pages that definitely do not point the road to glory. To name one—there were the wreckers. Dwellers on the coast, in counties better left unnamed, were accustomed to lure passing vessels to their doom, by showing false lights. They would then cheerfully

gather in a harvest from the flotsam and jetsam. Farms situated where an occasional wreck was probable fetched a higher rent. So curious is English religion that thanks would be returned to God for this providential support.

Such sins have been in a sense redeemed by the heroism of the lifeboatmen in more enlightened days. Now, in case of a wreck, the whole energy of the people is bent on saving the lives of the crew. The shore breakers in a storm are the most dreaded; an ordinary small boat is useless for help, as it would be dashed to pieces at once. What is needed in a boat for rescue purposes is at least three things: strength, to stand the knocking of surf and rocks; unsinkability; speed. These points are not easy to combine. A London coach-builder, named Lukin, made an unsinkable boat at the end of the eighteenth century, and soon after, the first real lifeboat was made by Greathead, and many lives were saved by the boats built to his pattern. "The Royal National Lifeboat Institution" was founded in 1824, but nobody took much interest in it, so that it nearly died of bankruptcy. It was saved, however, by an incident in 1849 which stirred the country; and money is always poured out when England's sluggish emotions are once aroused. A lifeboat overturned in going to assist a wreck, and twenty out of the crew of twenty-four were drowned. The consequence is that now there are hundreds of lifeboats round the coast, and many thousands of lives have been saved.

Turning to a brighter side of the subject, look a moment at the map and note how close all our main centres of population are to the sea, if not in actual mileage, in shortness of time through railway service. Going to the seaside is an English institution. Our

neighbouring nations have seaside resorts, but they are fewer, and mostly for the well-to-do, as ours used to be a century ago. But now all but the poorest of us get a breath of the sea air, if only for a week; and there are ever so many charitable funds for sending the poorest for a few days, or at least for one long day, just to have the beatific vision of the sea.

In the coaching days this was a rare treat even for the rich. Emma, Jane Austen's heiress heroine, had never seen the sea; and some of us are old enough to remember our parents telling of the astonishment caused by a first view of the sea to grown-up people. Some inspired doctor at the end of the eighteenth century (when so many things seem to have happened) conceived the happy notion that sea-air and sea-bathing were good for the health. Brighton, under royal patronage, began to eclipse Bath. Soon a bathing establishment for London patients was erected at Margate. The ball was set rolling. The railways were such a help to the movement to the sea that the seaside has been called the "child of the railway." Excursions have been getting more frequent, better advertised, cheaper and more convenient, year by year. To-day thousands of London business-men live by the sea, and reach their offices almost as easily as dwellers in the suburbs, owing to the good service of trains.

But the seaside is pre-eminently regarded as the paradise of children. To an English child the very word "seaside" spells a kind of delirium. It is a combination of so many joys: parents are in gay mood; ordinary restrictions are withdrawn; there is the prime delight of wriggling bare toes in wet sand; there is the smell of the seaweed and the sound of the breaking waves, with their many-voiced laughter; the

screaming and the swooping of the seagulls; the bliss of not having to be tidy; the ravenous hunger for the midday meal; the delicious picnics, when the sand gets into the tea; the buns from a strange shop, captured by the adventurous; the shrimping expeditions on the rocks when the tide goes out; the possible sail or row in a real boat; walks to explore the hinterland; the humour provided by the lodging-house pictures, ornaments and aspidistra; and above all, the ceaseless joy of the spade and pail, and the wonders of the shells in shape and colour.

A clever picture in *Punch* (by Charles Keen) shows a railway carriage full of young boys, all crowded to one side and shouting, "There's the sea!" with the joy of the Ten Thousand in Asia Minor. One little fellow who is unable to squeeze through and get a glimpse, is busy taking off his shoes and stockings and muttering, "I'll be *in* it fust, though."

The following was written by Dickens from Broadstairs in 1840, and so little have times changed in seaside conditions that it might well have been written to-day:

"The sea is rolling away in front of the window at which I indite this epistle, and everything is as fresh and glorious as fine weather and a splendid coast can make it. . . . Come to the bower which is shaded for you in the one-pair front, where no chair or table has four legs of the same length, and where no drawers will open till you have pulled the pegs off, and then they keep open and won't shut again. Come!"

The following, from Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* shows that the Anglo-Saxon race has taken its love of the sea to America:

"But look! here come more crowds, pacing straight

for the water, and seemingly bound for a dive. Strange! nothing will content them but the extremest limit of the land; loitering under the shady lee of yonder warehouses will not suffice. No. They must get just as nigh the water as they possibly can without falling in. And there they stand—miles of them—leagues. Inlanders all, they come from lanes and alleys, streets and avenues—north, east, south and west. Yet here they all unite. Tell me, does the magnetic virtue of the needles of the compasses of all those ships attract them thither?”

The many small islands included under the term “British Isles” afford a curious study in themselves. When isolated at some distance from the mainland, they become miniature Englands, as it were. For instance, it was said of Lundy not very many years ago, that there were only two families on the island, and that they never spoke to one another. The most pleasing one to visit as a specimen is the Isle of Wight. This has a quite good climate, and thus attracts people for the holidays, and invalids who need sunshine. It is a great yachting centre, but otherwise the chief problem that stirs those who stay there is the exact state of the tide. In short, you live with the sea and for the sea. When the war began in 1914, an aged man was set to surround the island with a line of barbed wire, but he took so long over it that the inhabitants feared the enemy would arrive before he had finished.

A legend runs that the inhabitants of Wight used to go on all fours. When a visitor from the mainland suggested an upright position, they said, holding up their hands, “Then what shall us do with thesen?” So they put their hands in their pockets where they have remained ever since.



Wight is a kind of miniature England in the variety it gives of geological strata, in its main occupations of agriculture, sheep-rearing and even shipbuilding, in its scenery, its old cottages and gardens, in its possession of a castle of great historic interest, and also of a considerable forest. The island is divided into two "liberties" (see chapter xx.). One oddity in the church at Yarmouth is characteristic of England and will amuse our French visitors. During our wars with France in the reign of William III., an Italian sculptor was voyaging to Paris with a statue of Louis XIV., complete with buckled shoes, etc., but with the head unshaped. This was to be completed in Paris, so as to be a real likeness of the grand monarch. But the ship was captured by the English, and Admiral Holmes conceived the idea of making the sculptor finish the statue with a likeness of himself instead of Louis. And there it stands in the church, with the inscription "Robertus Holmes, obit 1692." The sculptor seems to have made the admiral look as bull-necked and ill-tempered and as unlike Louis as he possibly could, so that the general effect might be absurdly incongruous.

On the whole, therefore, Wight would be a good spot to choose for a short stay, especially as it is not hard to get at. One of our islands, on the contrary, is apt to involve such a tricky passage that some visitors to it many years ago are still there; they have settled down in the island rather than face the return journey.

Some indication of the large part taken by the sea in English life is afforded by the number of metaphors derived from it. Here are a few, the meaning of which can be easily detected, and matched in another language:

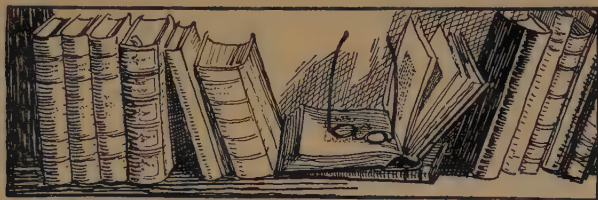
A fair-weather friend. To be on one's beam ends. Listing heavily to port. Gone aground. To cut one's

cable. Full steam ahead. To slip one's moorings. To cut the painter. Marooned. Half-seas over. In the Doldrums. To sail near the wind. If you won't be ruled by the rudder you must be ruled by the rock. To make headway. To be on the rocks. To take the wind out of anyone's sails. To be stranded. To spoil the ship for a ha'porth of tar. Don't speak to the man at the wheel. To clear the decks for action. To know the ropes. All hands to the pumps. To raise the wind. Any port in a storm. To box the compass. To give anyone a wide berth. To trim the boat. To pull your weight. To throw your weight about. At half-mast. To splice the mainbrace. To go to Davy's locker. To nail your colours to the mast. To swing the lead. To turn widdershins about. To let anything go by the board. To find your sea-legs.



SECTION V  
SOME  
ENGLISH PECULIARITIES





## CHAPTER XXIX

### OUR HUMAN FACTORIES

As a nation we are extremely conservative. To get England to move is like trying to push a dog from the hearthrug. The policy of *laissez-faire* is entirely congenial. "Mind your own business" is our watchword, however much we bow the knee to nobler aspirations. As though by compensation for this deep-rooted streak in our character, certain sections of the community are seized every now and again with some inspiring craze, some fad, some panacea. At first, these rages are taken very seriously by the few, generally termed by the many, "high-brows" or "intellectuals." Then the fashion spreads to the suburbs, then to the country towns, then to the heathen. Long before this last stage, the thing has become a subject of jest, has been satirised in *Punch*, has entered the topical comic song. After this the good that was in the craze begins to take real but silent effect, and manages to live in spite of the formation of societies to keep it alive. The æsthetic movement in the eighties was such a craze, and later we have had vegetarian diet, eugenics, faith-healing, psycho-analysis, the Dalton method, and a hundred others.

Education is a happy hunting-ground for such enterprises. We do not dare to thrust our opinions on our doctor or our lawyer when health or property

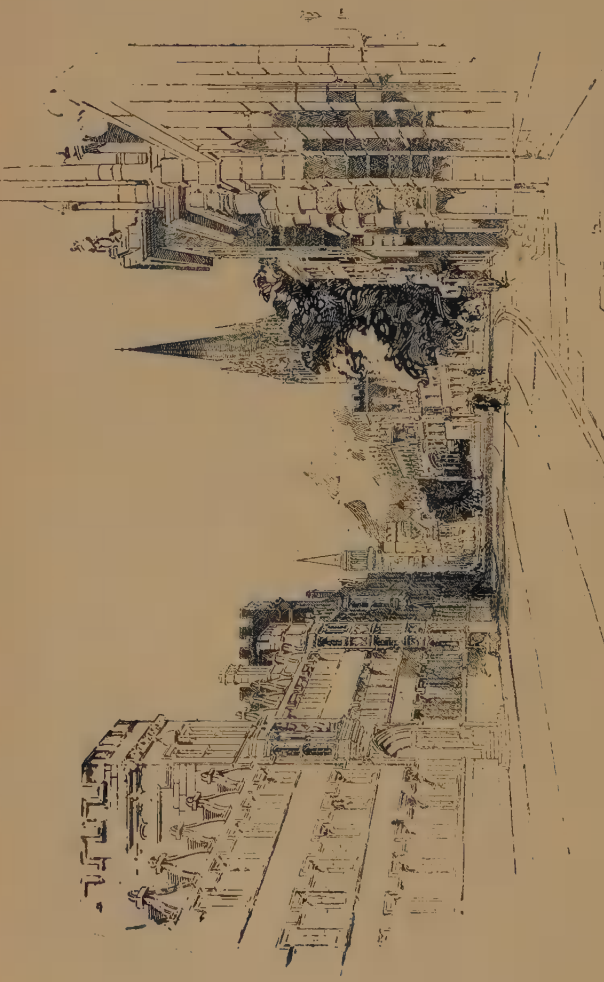
is in jeopardy, but everybody knows what should be done to children's minds, and opinions are put forth broadcast. Hence a large number of societies formed to push particular nostrums. Each has, without doubt, a "good idea" in it. Each has its chairman, vice-chairman, treasurer, worried secretary, and steadily decreasing subscription list. But this is the way in which progress is really made. And, though a little ridiculous, it seems to make for more freedom and adventure than if well-considered schemes were imposed by authority, however representative and wise such authority may be.

Amid all the changes, innovations and reformations of our modern education, one field of labour remains sublimely untouched—the public school. At least, if touched and moved, it does not advertise the fact. The subject of education as a whole in England is too complicated to treat here, so that it is better to speak only of the public schools, since they present something that is essentially English. Why they are called "public" is one of their many mysteries, for they are very difficult to get into, as well as being expensive. Their number has increased of late years, but at the time of the Inquiry Commission of 1868 there were nine chief ones mentioned, which came in consequence to be called the "mystic nine." These were: Winchester, Westminster, Eton, Harrow, Charterhouse, Shrewsbury, Rugby, Merchant Taylors' and St. Paul's. Not only is the word "public" misleading, but the word "school" is open to challenge. Real scholarship is on the premises, and real scholars emanate from them, but the main occupation is athletics. Those who want to work, can. It has been said of these schools that the boys are not taught,

but they learn. They learn far more from the life than from the classroom, or even the library. They learn, to use the common parlance, to play the game, to stay the course, to take a licking, to hate sentimentality, to obey orders, and to command. These things can be acquired nowhere else in quite the same way, not even at the 'Varsity. There is nothing so serious and dignified on this planet as a sixth-form boy in one of these schools.

Endless abuse has been poured on this "best education" of ours, but it is a curious point to note that business men (and who knows his business better than a business man in a nation of shopkeepers?) are continually advertising for "public-school men," quite regardless of their erudition or experience. Such boys, whatever their lack of science and literature, and this lack is often colossal, have been under the direct and daily influence of some of the finest minds in the country, have learned to associate happily with their kind, can take a dressing-down without resentment, and they can be trusted to go over the top in any emergency.

UNIVERSITY LIFE. England has numerous universities, but the old ones of Oxford and Cambridge consider themselves far and away beyond any other, and for that matter beyond each other. Between them there is friendly rivalry and mutual contempt. They sling offensive epithets at one another in public, much as a devoted husband and wife are apt to do. Thus Oxford asserts that some guide-book had this instruction: "The Universities of Oxford and Cambridge should be visited, but if time presses, Cambridge may be omitted." On the other hand, Cambridge relates how



*The High Street*  
On the left University College. On the right  
St. Mary's Church, Trinity College, Church of  
St. Mary the Virgin, Hall Court, and the College



an old Oxford don hoped that with the present march of science, Cambridge mathematical men might one day find out why the moon changes its size. Such pleasantries are innumerable, and are dear to the country at large. For it is a curious fact that every man, woman and child in England *is* either Oxford or Cambridge, especially when the great day of the boat-race draws near. Dark- and light-blue favours are sold in the streets, and feelings run high. Very many years ago the colours were: Oxford blue, Cambridge red. But on one occasion, for some reason, the Cambridge crew found themselves without their colours; someone ran into Putney to buy new ones, could get no red, so had to be content with light blue. Ever since that day, light blue has been the Cambridge colour. But another legend ascribes the light blue to Eton. The excitement of the race is kept up in London till late at night. The theatres and restaurants are crowded, just for the fun of seeing large numbers of university men adding to the lively scenes in their own original way. As the magistrate said, "A certain licence is granted on the night following the annual aquatic contest." If you miss the boat-race in the spring, similar festivities attend the 'Varsity "Rugger" match in December.

But to turn to the life in the university itself. Lectures of course play a certain part, but by no means the most important. Men of the highest standing in every branch of knowledge live there, and exist as an ever fresh well of information, as specialists, that is, "persons who ever know more and more about less and less." They often lecture so inefficiently that they cannot be heard, or understood, if heard. But there they are. The chief means of instructing the

undergraduates are the informal talks with their various *tutors*, in private rooms and in small groups. As an American visitor wittily observed, they are "smoked" into scholarship. By a kind of mental osmosis, too, the atmosphere of the place has due effect. Those who want to work hard for a First in Finals are encouraged to do so, but the majority of young men gain quite other advantages from university life. In a wider and totally different way from what is possible in any one school, they learn to mix with all classes, since there is no distinction between high and low, rich and poor. A man is judged by what he *is*, not by what he has or what his father was. It is a grand field for making friends. Even if scholarship be not aimed at or attained, no one can leave the university without having a good idea of the difference between scholarship and superficiality, and this in itself is a valuable attainment.

As a rule, every undergraduate, even the hard-working one, takes up some sport in good earnest. The most coveted thing in this direction is to be a "blue." For this a man must play for the University against the other University in one of the principal games (rowing, cricket, football, hockey), or be first string in an event in the Inter-University Sports. Less important sports, such as running, boxing, swimming, fencing, water-polo, afford a half-blue.

Beside the athletic interest, there is every kind of literary, scientific, philosophical, musical, dramatic and artistic circle. No one can be so peculiar as to find no kindred spirits, except perhaps one Oxford man who was "too bored to be about." So there are clubs for everything—dining clubs, drinking clubs, political clubs. . . . Of the debating clubs the "Union" is



King's Parade

the most famous, where many of our well-known statesmen learned their oratory. But for the most part a club is only temporary, the work of some man of strong personality, and it is apt to collapse when he goes down. Every college, however, has some kind of permanent social club. Every college, too, has its permanent athletic club, for inter-collegiate sport never ceases, the rivalry is very keen, and continual training is demanded. To illustrate this, let us take the most spectacular of the sports, and the one that chiefly attracts outsiders—rowing.

The training that a man undergoes for a rowing contest is severe. For the Lent races, at Oxford called "Toggers" (a corruption of *Torpids*), he begins to train three weeks beforehand. He goes to bed at ten and gets up at seven. On getting up he walks or runs and then has a cold bath. Breakfast is as large a meal as he can possibly manage. All the training men take this together, and it is paid for by the *non-rowing* members of the college. It consists of porridge, fish, steak or chop, and as much marmalade as possible. Tea is limited to two cups. If he can keep awake, he may do a little mental work during the morning. After a light lunch, he attacks the main business of the day—rowing all the afternoon. Dinner contains a vast quantity of milk puddings, which seems one of the severest of the strains. Drink is strictly limited. Smoking is absolutely forbidden. Anyone caught smoking, or up late, is liable to be thrown out at once.

In the race itself, whether Toggers or the *Eights* (a more advanced race, with sliding seats), the boats start in a line *along* the river, 160 feet apart for Toggers, and 120 for Eights. The signal of a gun sounds, and

they start. The short time waiting for the gun to sound is the severest trial in the whole affair. The object of each boat is to touch the one in front. Each touch is called a "bump." In the race on the next day, the boat that bumped the other takes the higher place on the river. The races last less than a week, and if a crew has done well, that is, made one or two bumps and put its college higher up on the river, a "bump supper" is held, where the crew are the guests of the college, and two members from the crew of each boat they have bumped are invited. Imagination can picture the largeness of that supper, and how it is enjoyed by those who have been in training.

Relief is required from the severity of both hard mental work and athletic training. Some vent, too, is needed for superfluous wit and physical energy. This is obtained by various forms of "ragging." A few illustrations will best describe what this is. Any man who gives himself airs, or makes himself objectionable in any way at all, is liable to be ragged, by having all his belongings massed into the middle of the room, or thrown outside, or to have the room choked up with bicycles. His own bicycle may be painted in variegated colours; or it may be taken to bits and sent to different towns, to be posted to him piecemeal. His pictures may be taken and hung as an art exhibition in the quad, with descriptive titles of no flattering nature. One Oxford man who had incurred the displeasure of his fellow college men, returned from a week-end's absence to find his room literally upside-down. The carpet was fastened on the ceiling, table and chairs were nailed to it, pictures reversed, clock hung the wrong way up, and so on. Expense in many of these cases seems to be no consideration.



Maggiolen  
Bridge & Tower

The term "ragging" is now often applied to adventure or hoax that produces fun, quite apart from any intention to punish or annoy. Sometimes rags are of an elaborate and ambitious nature. Placards were once placed all over Oxford announcing a coming public meeting, with an opening address, on the subject of Chinese Psychology. The hired hall was thronged with earnest women students and reverend dons, as well as undergraduates. A highly technical description of the development of psychology in China was delivered by a man in Eastern attire, who retreated when it was over to his rooms in Balliol, leaving the debate to be carried on until the farce began to dawn on the audience. . . .

At Jesus College, Cambridge, there is a large German gun on the green. One morning the Jesus men looked out to find in its place a penny toy gun. A band of Caius men had come in the night and carried it off to their own college, without making a sound or attracting anyone's attention. This in such a watched and guarded place was a marvellous feat. Of course, the Jesus men went to Caius and, after a free fight, recaptured the gun.

The following rag appealed to the less intellectual of the undergraduates. A large number of rats was procured and hidden under bags of flour on a lorry. The intention was to release them in the Cadena, a fashionable restaurant for morning coffee. But the rats escaped too soon. Now it is characteristic of an Englishman that a rat-hunt is to him quite irresistible. Everyone, town and gown, went for the rats, to the utter confusion of the traffic, and a poor Press photographer who tried to get a snapshot of the absurd affair was bombarded with the captured rats. Thus Oxford.

Sometimes a great effect is produced by an anti-climax. For instance, a rag was talked about widely, and the police were notified in order to regulate the crowds. It was to consist of a vast number of caravans, to enter the town in procession. On the appointed day, there were the crowds, and there were the police, mustered in great expectancy. All that came forth was one undergraduate, drawing a toy caravan by a string along the road from which all the traffic had been diverted. That was Cambridge. At Oxford, again, it was well advertised that on a certain morning a greased pig would be let loose in the Corn-market, for a public hunt. But it was not.

There is an Alpine Club at Oxford, devoted to the sport of climbing college towers and public memorials, involving the fixing of some object on the top as a proof that the deed has been done. On one occasion there was considerable difficulty in removing the object from the Martyrs' Memorial, as the climb is a perilous one.

Sometimes the rag consists in doing an innocent and trifling action that is forbidden by an ancient university regulation. Thus at Cambridge an old statute forbids the playing of marbles on the Senate House steps, and at Oxford the undergraduates may not bowl hoops along the High.

Most of these are merely amusing, but in case they go too far, or if serious regulations are disregarded, discipline is maintained by the "proctors," specially appointed dons, who patrol the streets with their "bulldogs" (servants who pursue and capture any misbehaving undergraduate). The sinner is asked, "Are you a member of this University?" and is then requested to give his name and college. This procedure





Clare College and  
Bridge

is called "being progged." There is a story of an Oxford man being progged when on a visit to Cambridge, and to the usual first question of the proctor he replied, "Oh! is there a university *here* too?"

The women's colleges are a modern growth, and their traditions are in process of formation. The most striking difference at present between the men and the women is that all the women who come up are *workers*. There is not an unlimited number of places in the colleges to be had, so that only good scholars can get in. This contrasts with the number of wealthy young men who can join a college with the minimum of learning, and no great ambition to acquire any more. Frequently a first-class athlete can enter a college "and no questions asked," so to speak.

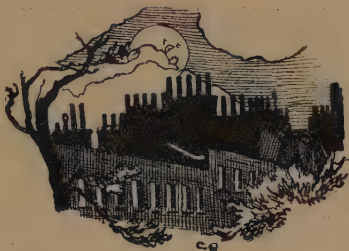
Owing to the women being in the minority, many careful regulations have to be in force, but we have got beyond the days when Girton was placed, apparently for safety, a considerable distance from the town. By the way, it just escaped being at Hitchin! No doubt, at the present rate of progress, the regulations now laid down will have faded into disuse by the time these words are read, and will soon have the quaint interest of the forbidding of hoops in the High. As things are to-day, it looks as if the undergraduates and undergraduettes had to be defended from each other.

The amusements of the girls are of a more restrained nature than those of the men. No ragging, as may be presumed. But there are plenty of more intellectual outlets for the feelings, such as Russian Drama, League of Nations Union, Bach Choir, Balliol Concerts, Student Christian Movement, Revival of non-Shakespearian Seventeenth-century Plays. Where men race, women row. Where men play "Rugger,"

women play net-ball. Dancing in the common-room is the giddiest thing they do. Considering that no woman is admitted who is not intending to work for an honours degree, it looks as if not only much greater freedom of mixing with the men, but far more recreative amusements, will very shortly develop.

## BOOK

*College Monographs of Oxford and Cambridge* (Dent).





## CHAPTER XXX

### TWO LEADERS OF OPINION

EVERY shade of political opinion, every society, trade, school, or body of any kind, produces an "organ," or publication of some kind, to ventilate its views. If, therefore, you have any special field to investigate, or any hobby, it would be well to inquire of any good newsagent for the newspaper or magazine that devotes space and attention to it. You will by this means find out the headquarters of any society in connection with it, and be able to get from the secretary all the latest doings. The said secretary is generally overjoyed to meet someone on whom he can shower pamphlets and with whom he can have a chat.

As the number of daily papers is bewildering in amount, and as each paper affords some difficulty in learning "where to find things," it is best to choose *one* and stick to it. You will soon know exactly on which page to find foreign news, law reports, sporting fixtures, theatres, and the WEATHER.

The best-known paper, and the most distinctively English, is *The Times*. There is a clear Index, showing on which page to find what you want. News is dealt out in the even-handed manner of a pack of cards. No attempt is made to produce sensation about any event; in fact you have to bring your own emotion. As though *en revanche* for this, we find on the front page the "Agony Column," so called because star-crossed lovers, distracted mothers seeking lost sons, disgruntled husbands renouncing their wives' debts, distressed widows "going to India" and wishing to sell their pearls, all pour out their desires in the part marked "Personal." One well-known literary man said that he never read any other part of the paper; he probably got his plots here.

Learned articles on any topic of the day in science, art, or literature, are always to be found, and serious-minded people will make a copy of *The Times* last them for a long railway journey. One of the most interesting features is the Correspondence. Here, you may be sure, is someone who has got something to say, not merely got to say something. It is an Englishman's privilege to be able to "write to *The Times* about it," and it is often this outlet to the feelings, and ventilation of grievances, that keeps England from much "unrest." Not only grievances, but curious facts, customs, historical points, etc., are continually being contributed, so that this part of the paper is well worth watching. Marked as "From a Correspondent," too, there is frequently a short article on some little-known corner of the country; in fact, it would be possible to construct a private guide-book by cutting out such articles and filing them.

With regard to any burning political or social

question, *The Times* has for so long taken the lead among English newspapers, and has been wont to express its judgments so cautiously, that if ever it does take a firm line on public affairs, it compels attention. These very occasional effective outbursts have gained for it the sobriquet of "The Thunderer."

The other paper that is distinctively English is *Punch*; it is even more effective as a moral influence than *The Times*. Ostensibly a humorous paper, it maintains a very high level of wit and wisdom. Often by means of its cartoons it holds up to scorn some public scandal, or pricks the bubble of some foolish political scheme, without attaching itself to any particular party. A clever cartoon will catch the attention of the nation better than many a leading article in the heavier papers and many an eloquent sermon. Through these cartoons the faces of our chief statesmen become familiar to all, and some little trick of dress or appearance is permanently associated with each (such as Gladstone's large collars and Mr. Baldwin's pipe). Anyone studying the history of England during the last eighty years could hardly do better than acquire old volumes of *Punch*. They will give him the leading political excitements, the social crazes, the fashions, and the changing types of humour (e.g. at one period puns were a source of pleasure, whereas now they would not be tolerated).

People who *read Punch* systematically, as opposed to those who merely glance at the pictures, enjoy a kind of freemasonry among one another. When *Punch* is brought to a family of this type, a stern rule holds that the early readers do not mention the jokes to the others.

The publishers issued, a few years ago, a half-crown

volume containing short notes on the history of *Punch* for its first fifty years (1841-91), with some of the most famous cartoons, and the most popular of the drawings and jokes. An account was also given of the leading contributors. Charles Dickens was at one time a "rejected contributor." Thackeray sent in much, both drawings and articles. Leech was the best-known artist in the early days. Later on Du Maurier and Charles Keen did most of the drawings, while Tenniel devoted himself to the cartoons. But to-day there is such a galaxy of clever artists on the staff that it would be invidious to mention any names at all. One extract from an old volume (1 November, 1879) may perhaps be permitted, to illustrate the way in which Englishmen can enjoy a joke against themselves. It also serves to show how a letter to *The Times* soothes their irritated feelings.

"*Indignant Anglo-Saxon* [to Provincial French Innkeeper, who is bowing his thanks for the final settlement of his exorbitant and much-disputed account]: 'Oh, oui, Mossoo, pour le matière de ça, je paie. Mais juste vous regardez ici, mon ami. Et juste vous marquez mes mots. Je paie—mais je mette le dans *la Times*.'"

*The Times* and *Punch* make an amusing pair to take in regularly. With *The Times* every morning you get a serious, deep and thorough grasp of each event as it comes along. But on Wednesday morning, after unbending over *Punch* for a bit, you get a sense of proportion, and see that you have omitted some essential feature that requires you to reshuffle all your ideas. What had seemed a grand scheme of reform, is seen to be likely to injure some other set of people that had been forgotten. What had seemed a burning

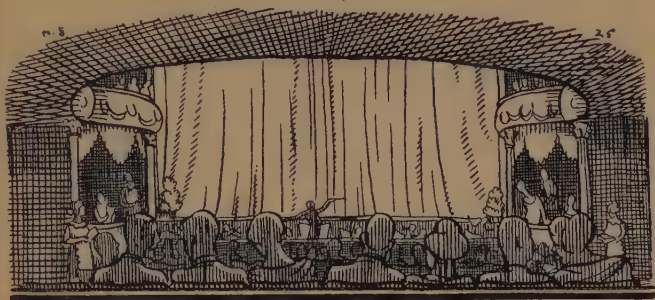
public scandal, is seen to have its pleasant or even beneficial side. And if you will bear in mind how *Punch* speaks of the leader-writers of *The Times* as "Men who every night of their lives preserve the nation from disaster, stabilise the franc, tranquillise India, reorganise China, revive the steel trade, or rebuke the United States,"—well, you recover from any fit of over-seriousness that had fallen on you.

In the London Museum is an early printing-press. This should be compared with the mammoth machines now in use. Permission can be obtained to visit the printing-rooms of a great daily paper, and this provides an interesting night excursion, with glimpses of a side of London life that the ordinary visitor may never suspect. The office of an evening paper can be seen in the daytime.

In another room of the same museum are some copies of newspapers published in the early part of the nineteenth century. We talk of our "sensational" Press, but our most lurid specimens to-day are models of dignified reserve compared with these. Crude representations of men and women hanging, as well as imaginative sketches of the horrible deeds for which the hanging was the punishment, must surely have been far more degrading than any verbal description that may be gloated over by some readers nowadays.

We have countless religious papers, some of them of a very exalted tone, but very few without some side glance of disapproval or contempt towards those of a different shade of belief. It has been said, indeed, that if we wanted to send a paper to heaven, to show how our Christianity is getting on, the only one quite safe to send would be *Punch*.





## CHAPTER XXXI

### THE OLD VIC

THE stage, like science and art, is cosmopolitan. Some years ago it would have been easier to mention not only points that were characteristic of English drama, but points that differentiated one English theatre from another. To get a comprehensive idea of what is being done, it is best to visit the various houses almost haphazard. The one that is peculiar, and not likely to be matched outside England, is the Old Vic, at Vauxhall. This house has a strange history of ups and downs. After Waterloo Bridge had been opened in 1817 (see chapter xix.), traffic, trade, streets and houses naturally increased on the Surrey side. The new settlers there needed amusement, and to meet the need the Royal Coburg Theatre was built. This name was due to the marriage of the beloved Princess Charlotte with Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg (afterwards King of the Belgians), and the young couple were the patrons of the theatre. By ill fate, the princess never lived even to see the opening performance in 1818. Later on the name was changed to "The Royal Victoria Hall," and has long been

known as the "Old Vic," and is always so called, even in public announcements.

Last century it sank into a bad way, and became gradually more and more disreputable, first in the class of people who formed the usual audience, and then in the type of play that was put on to suit their tastes. But, in 1880, a true reformer and missionary if ever there was one—Miss Cons—saw what a grand opportunity was here being missed. She saw what so many religious and earnest people in England fail to see, that it is through people's play that they can be best "got at." She took up the Old Vic, staged gradually improving types of performance, and abolished alcoholic drink. Decent people began to come, and were able to bring their families.

By 1914 the Old Vic had risen to Shakespeare, and since that year it has been associated with him in everyone's mind. Since that year, too, every single play of his has been put on, even such rarely performed ones as *Henry VI.* and *Titus Andronicus*. No one who wants to study the English people should miss a night at the Old Vic, and a Shakespeare night (for of course they do a great many other things). Probably in this place you get nearer to the original atmosphere of the Elizabethan stage than in many a carefully-produced performance that tries to reconstruct the actual circumstances, scenery and diction of Shakespeare's time. All such have an academic air which defeats the main object. Now at the Old Vic a very little effort of imagination transports you to the original *milieu*. First of all, the acting is of the highest quality. The plays are not cut or modernised, but each actor gets into the spirit of his part and renders it lovingly. But almost as important to the general effect is the



Ex observationibus Londinensibus  
Johannis De Witt

INTERIOR OF THE OLD SWAN THEATRE

audience, so entirely different from the intellectual "select" that you would see in a university town, or on a Sunday-night affair in London. A mass of enthusiasts fills the huge theatre, following everything with rapt attention (and there is always a fair proportion of children). Many of them do not know the plot, and hang upon "what is going to happen," just as the Elizabethans must have done. You can gather this from the gasps of surprise and fits of laughter around you. I once heard a woman exclaim, at the point in *Much Ado* when Beatrice is summoned away from Benedick by a message from her uncle, "Oh, bother the uncle!" Moreover, there is a delightful camaraderie all the time between the actors and the audience, shown especially when the actors come quite informally and noddingly in front of the curtain, in response to the thunderous applause they always seem to get.

The fact is, they really do know one another, in a sense that is impossible in an ordinary theatre. For there are families of regular patrons, who will book the same seats, throughout the season, for the same day in the week.

"Father and mother and all the children grow attached to the special stalls or circles which the Box Office knows by their names. There are Harrison seats, there are Jennings seats, there are seats where the Browns always congregate; and directly the opening dates are announced, the Browns, the Jennings, and the Harrisons sit down and write to the Box Office insisting on the same old quarters" (from *The Old Vic*, by Cicely Hamilton and Lilian Baylis).

On Twelfth Night (6 January) there is a feast on the stage, and a Twelfth-cake eaten with great

ceremony. Whatever day you go, do not omit to get a cup of tea and a bun from the bar, where everyone is as friendly and jolly as in the auditorium. Perhaps it was this friendly atmosphere as much as the performance that led a poor fellow to rearrange his mind. He was making for Waterloo Bridge to commit suicide, and went into the Old Vic for a few last minutes of life. Whatever it was he saw and felt, it gave him courage to go on again.

With something of the same spirit there are "Little Theatres" in various parts of the country. These are run by co-operative effort. The Citizen House at Bath has already been mentioned (chapter xxii.). The "Norwich Playgoers" were founded by a few amateurs discontented with the usual type of play given in provincial towns. That was in 1911. By 1921 they were able to buy their own theatre. The building was in the old market where madder was sold, and the name "Madder-market" has stuck to the theatre. In the eighteenth century the building had been a Roman Catholic church; later it was a baking-powder factory, and later still a Salvation Army stronghold. Now it is an exact model of an Elizabethan theatre. These players have found that the two most popular plays in the language are *Hamlet* and *The School for Scandal*.

Old folk-plays, like folk-dancing and folk-songs, have been the subject of special study in recent years. Having their roots in ancient pagan ritual, they were associated with religion, and were used by the Church for teaching doctrine and biblical stories. But, later on, the riotous scenes connected with plays led to their suppression by the Puritans. Even the Puritan Milton, however, wrote a masque, and no legislation could prevent the performance of comic scenes at

fairs during the Commonwealth (such as the scenes with the Grave-diggers from *Hamlet*, Falstaff, and Bottom the Weaver). In quite recent years the following "one-act play" was observed at a village pond in Yorkshire:

Subject of the Play—The Flood.

Scene—The Diluvian World.

On a boat in the pond were discovered Noah, his wife, three sons, a dog, a cat and a parrot. Swimming about in the pond were several villagers.

*First Villager.* It's verra wet, Noah.

*Noah.* That's verra like.

*Second Villager.* Couldst tha let a body in, Noah?

*Noah.* Nah, t' shouldst a coom in with t' percession. Shut t' winder, Japhet.

#### CURTAIN

Now if people's enthusiasm for drama will lead them to swim about in a north-country pond, it is obvious that there is a grand field for dramatic work on simple lines in our villages and country towns. But it must be done for sheer enjoyment, and to label it Adult Education, or Popular Uplift, will surely kill all desire for it quite quickly. There is nothing an Englishman so dislikes as an attempt to improve him. A recent *Report on the Drama in Adult Education*, published by the Board of Education, gives a delightful account (at the cost of a shilling) of what is being done all over the country in this direction. Anyone interested in it would do well to take a copy with him in travelling about England, as chance might throw him near some town or village where he could see some of the acting, or at least rehearsing, actually in progress.

To take one example of what a village may do, the Stoneland Players have worked at Greek plays in West Hoathly (Sussex) for many years. Mrs. Godwin King, to whose zeal their success is mainly due, gives an interesting account of them in her evidence reported in the above-mentioned pamphlet. The plays were the outcome of a course of University Extension Lectures on "The Inspiration of Greece," in 1910. At first the performers were limited to the students of the extension course, but the village choral society was asked to help with the chanting of the Greek choruses. This society was composed of women, who soon asked if their husbands might come. At first the villagers only took part in the crowds or in the chorus, but every year more of them took leading parts. Anyone who wished could join the players, and their ages varied from seventy-four to three. About seventy people took part in the Greek plays, and about 300 came to each performance. The plays were given in the open air, or in a covered yard. At the back of the yard was a barn which served as a temple. No charge was made for admission, but a collection was taken to help expenses. No names were printed on the programmes, so that there has been little room for jealousy and hurt feelings.

When they first began, visits were paid to the British Museum, to see how the clothes should be put on and how the hair should be dressed. One curious fact came out in Mrs. King's evidence: although they liked any good play, Shakespearian or modern, yet they got far less tired of rehearsing a Greek one than any other; again, they were glad to take part in a Greek play after acting in another kind. Thus, a boy, who had been Dogberry, was glad to be a herdsman in the

*Iphigenia in Tauris*, and a woman from the women's institute preferred a part in a Greek play to one in a modern play. Probably the strong and simple emotions of the Greek tragedy appeal to a deeper side, and spoil the taste for the frequently silly little plays that are often thought to be all that the members of a women's institute can appreciate. Gilbert Murray's translations were used, and very probably the diction and the rhythm were an attraction in themselves. The blacksmith's wife was an invalid, but never missed a performance, being brought in a bath-chair. An old man had sobbed during the final scene of the *Ædipus*, although he had been to every rehearsal.

One further quotation must be made from the Report, just to show how really "of the people" these village plays are. The following is from the description of the work of the Shoreham Village Players:

"The Players are organised on a democratic basis, the great majority being local tradesmen and agricultural and other workers. The part of Quince was, for instance, played alternately by a local haulage contractor and one of the village grocers, Lysander and Demetrius by a civil engineer, an innkeeper and a carpenter, and Duke Theseus by Mr. Geering, the proprietor of a three-hundred-year-old butcher's shop. Oberon fell to the son of a local innkeeper and the parts of Egeus and Titania to Mr. Draffin, a tailor, and his daughter."

It is amusingly added that Elizabethan English and Shakespearian imprecations have become common parlance in the district. The local inn is often the scene of a spontaneous rehearsal.

In our more enlightened schools, the drama is used as one of the most important means of teaching, not



only the works of our dramatists, but proper speech, natural gesture and movement, stage management, co-operation and self-forgetfulness. At one of our public schools, a play in the original Greek is rendered every year. The theatre is cut in a chalk pit, to resemble the ancient Greek one as nearly as possible, with the conventional three doors, and the tiers of seats with no backs. This is at Bradfield, near Reading.





## CHAPTER XXXII

### SPORT

THE Englishman has a dread of being thought to take anything seriously. His religion is confined as much as possible to certain days, hours and places, and, as Lord Brougham said, is not allowed to invade the sanctity of private life. In one matter, however, he is intensely serious. Sport in any form is sacred. To behave in an "unsportsmanlike" manner is worse than a crime. To be guilty of murder does not involve so great a stigma as to cheat at cards, and no words can convey the contempt felt for a man who shoots a fox. Persiflage at work or in business is all very well, but in playing cards, "whist" or silence is the rule. *Punch* had a pair of pictures to show this: the first was entitled "Work," and depicted four men in an office, lounging in chairs or sprawling on the table, smoking and laughing; the second, called "Play," showed the same four men at a game of Bridge, with knitted brows and compressed lips, sitting up in a determined manner at table, concentrated on the matter in hand.

To know England, then, it is imperative to watch some games. So vast a subject can be only briefly touched on here, but a few things to look for may be noticed.

Sport is so much a part of the life of the people as a whole, that it forms a better bridge between different classes of society than many a more lofty endeavour. This is seen very strikingly in HORSE-RACING. The newsboy's cry, "All the winners," attracts both duke and road-sweeper. As for the Derby, no one escapes its glamour. People who *never bet*, ascetic curates and prudent maiden ladies, all have a shilling or two in a Derby sweepstake. On the day of the race, the roads to Epsom are crowded with every kind of vehicle—costers' carts jostling Mayfair cars—every cab and bicycle available, not to speak of special trains into which it seems as if the whole population of London were pouring. The cases in the courts of law have a mysterious tendency to "crack up," or be quickly settled, just before it is time to start for the Derby. Of course this is mere coincidence. The owner of the horse that wins is accustomed to "lead his horse in" after the race. When King Edward VII. won the Derby he followed the time-honoured custom, and led "Persimmon" in amongst one of the most enthusiastic crowds that England has ever known.

Ascot, close to Windsor, is not only the scene of one of the leading races, but is also a great social event, and the latest cries in fashion are to be seen there. Although run in June, it sometimes happens on a fine day, and the "altogether" of racing horses, beautiful dresses, and English scenery in sunshine, is a thing worth giving a good deal to see. Horse-racing of one kind or another can be seen practically all the year round, and the newspapers give full notice of it.

Several of our old cruel sports have died out, such as bear-baiting and cock-fighting. FOX-HUNTING, although regarded as cruel by many people, is still one of our leading sports, and is likely to survive for a long time. There will be no difficulty about getting an opportunity to see something of it, since

A southerly wind and a cloudy sky  
Proclaim it a hunting morning,

and such weather is not uncommon in England. Sometimes the sight is thrust upon you. The other day I had the hounds running all over my garden, only some fifteen miles from London. (See chapter xxvii. for further notes on hunting.)

The FOOTBALL season begins as soon as August is over, and lasts through the winter. It cannot be played if the ground is very hard, either from drought or frost, but no amount of rain interferes with it. A clear distinction must be made between Rugby football and Association football, generally shortened into "Rugger" and "Soccer." "Rugger" has not been tainted with professionalism, as "Soccer" has. In the latter game a player may receive a large sum for playing, and a noted man may be sold by one team to another. There is nothing of this kind in "Rugger."

Football was probably brought here by the Romans, who had a "seizing" ball game that seems to resemble it. The simple requisites for the game, a large ball and two goals, made it popular among the people from earliest times. There were no clubs or codes of rules, and it was something of a free fight. The great day for it was the Carnival, and Shrove Tuesday used to be called "Football Day." It became so rough and dangerous, however, that it was discoun-

tenanced in the early years of the nineteenth century, and was only kept up in the public schools, where it was under due control. The reason for the game being called "Rugby" is due to an accident. In the midst of a game one day at Rugby, a boy was in a difficulty and was inspired to pick up the ball in his *hands* and run with it. This method apparently recommended itself, and was adopted as legitimate play. This was some fifty years ago, and its "Jubilee" was recently celebrated by the erection of a stone to commemorate the "birth" of Rugby football. It did not make its way at first very rapidly, and for a long time Rugby and Merchant Taylors' were the only two schools that followed the new fashion.

It should be borne in mind that "Rugger" is a more scientific game than "Soccer," and is more complicated for onlookers to follow. This accounts for "Soccer" being played more extensively by those who cannot afford much time for athletics, and also for its attracting larger numbers to watch it. Most of the great public schools play "Rugger"; but some, including Winchester, play "Soccer."

The game as described in *Tom Brown's School Days* shows many points of difference between the Rugby football of those days and the "Rugger" of to-day—differences, for instance, in the numbers playing, in freedom of charging, seizing and hacking.

In 1863 the FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION was formed, to establish the game as strictly *foot-ball*, and to forbid the handling of the ball; the numbers playing were fixed at eleven each side; the ball was spherical. This led to the followers of the other game banding themselves together under the RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION, with its own code of rules. The number each side is

fifteen, and the ball egg-shaped. "Rugger" is supposed to be a rougher and more dangerous game than "Soccer," but more depends in this respect on the actual players than on any rules.

The best event in "Rugger" is the Inter-'Varsity Match at Twickenham, in early December. But any Saturday afternoon in winter will afford you a "Rugger" match at Twickenham. For "Soccer," the best event is the Cup Final at Wembley, in April. Then are to be seen train-loads of football enthusiasts coming from Lancashire to cheer the members of their favourite teams, and broad north-country accents and Welsh can be heard in the London streets.

CRICKET, although not so ancient a game as football, claims to be even more distinctively the national game. They share the year between them, for cricket begins on Good Friday and lasts through the summer. While football has developed the fighting and enduring spirit, cricket has developed a combination of quick legs, strong arms, patience, nice judgment, and swift execution. Both games induce a sinking of personal glory in that of the team.

In very early days there were no stumps, but a hole. Later, there was one stump; then two stumps. The bat has changed in shape. But from time immemorial the pitch has been twenty-two yards in length (see chapter xxiv.). The name is connected with the Saxon words: "cric," "crutch," "crooked"; for the early bats were crooked at the end, unlike the straight bats now in use. Edward IV. tried to suppress the game, as it was becoming a serious rival to archery, which was badly needed for military reasons. Anyone allowing the game to be played on his premises was

liable to three years' imprisonment, and anyone caught playing, to two years. In spite of illegality (perhaps because of it), the game persisted, and it is well known that Frederick, Prince of Wales, died in 1751 from the blow of a cricket-ball.

Cricket enthusiasts should make a pilgrimage to Mitcham, whose village green is, as it were, the cradle of the famous Surrey cricket. The Marylebone Cricket Club ranks as the leading club of the world. Their ground, Lord's, has been established in North-West London since the beginning of last century. They lay down rules for everybody else, and thus conformity is obtained in the clubs throughout the country, and there is no town, school, college or village that has not its cricket club.

Cricket may be seen at Lord's, or at the Oval (South London), where matches are continually being played throughout the summer, whenever the pitch is not under water. The match between the two public schools, Eton and Harrow, is one of the best-known cricket events of the year (at Lord's in July), and is a great social occasion.

But there is no need to "go" anywhere merely to see a game, as you cannot escape from it in England. Cricket is not confined to the well-to-do or socially important people. As soon as the season begins, cricket breaks out on every village green, every common, every public park, every school playground.

"Many boys who come from poor homes in the heart of a great city have to play their cricket in the streets with a shapeless bit of wood for a bat and



almost any sort of a round thing for a ball. Their wickets are the lamp-posts, and their boundaries the houses on either side. Yet they enjoy it in spite of the hooting motors and jostling pedestrians—unworthy interrupters of a noble sport—and in spite of the fact that they have none of the apparatus that the game really requires. You will see these boys crowding outside the gates at Lord's and the Oval, in the hope of catching a glimpse now and then of one or other of the players, or climbing on to the walls of neighbouring houses so that they may be able to watch the score board and so follow the progress of the game, without ever seeing one ball bowled or one stroke played. Cricket means as much to them as that" (from *Junior Cricket*, by G. W. R. Treadgold. Published by Dent).

England and Australia have long been rivals at cricket, and they play for the "Ashes" about every eighteen months—alternately in England and Australia. It was in 1882 that Australia gained her first victory on an English wicket, chiefly owing to the demon bowling of F. R. Spofforth. The *Sporting Times* published an "In Memoriam" notice, thus:

"In affectionate remembrance of English Cricket, which died at the Oval on 29th August, 1882. Deeply lamented by a large circle of sorrowing friends and acquaintances. R.I.P. (N.B.—The body will be cremated and the ashes will be taken to Australia.)"

The next match was in Australia, when the English team was victorious. Some Australian women then burned a stump, put the ashes in a small wooden urn and gave it to the conquering team as a trophy. The possession of that little urn has been disputed ever since, with endless searchings of heart as to the selection of the teams, dire fighting in the matches



(called the "Test Matches"), and all England and Australia breathless with excitement as to the result.

YACHTING is naturally a popular pastime with a sea-loving race. The upkeep of a yacht is too expensive for any but the rich, and the yachting events at Cowes every summer are not for the many. But seaside regattas are common enough, as well as little yachting trips along the coast for tourists, while the kind of caravan life in yachts on the Norfolk Broads is a great delight to town workers, and can be done with very little expense. The middle reaches of the Thames in summer time are gay with boating of all kinds, and everything culminates in the gala festivities of the Henley Regatta in July.

Some parts of England seem a paradise for FISHING, notably the mountain and moorland streams of the west—in Wales, Devon and Cornwall. Salmon and trout are the chief sport. There are shops in London (one in Gray's Inn Road) where you can buy every conceivable requisite for fishing, and get advice on any point, whether you are an old hand or a raw beginner. The passion for fishing seizes English boys almost as early as the love of engines. You will see on the banks of London canals, and by any little stream in the country, little urchins with rod and line, perhaps only a branch of a tree and a bit of string, as eager after their sticklebacks and minnows, and as solemn, self-contained, and patient under disappointment, as any experienced salmon-fisher wading in the River Dyfi. With what pride they carry home their "catch" in a glass jam-jar, and how big is their talk of the ones they put back in the river, and the ones they "nearly landed"!<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See page 62.

The noble art of self-defence has always been a serious pursuit of Englishmen. Prize-fighters, the "bruisers of England," carried on their sport long after it was illegal. They used to arrange the fights on the borders of two counties, so that they could easily shift their ground to the one in which the police were not in evidence at the moment. Cock-fighting in Ireland is still done to-day in the same manner, on the borders of the two states. In the days before the telegraph and telephone, a man "wanted by the police" in a country district could often jump across a stream into another area of justice, and laugh at his would-be captor.

The lineal descendant of prize-fighting is BOXING, and there are few accomplishments that make a man feel more comfortable in most circumstances than this. What is the consciousness of being well dressed, what is a good balance at the bank, what is a sound philosophy of life, what, some persons would add, are the consolations of religion, compared to the knowledge that you can lay your opponent out if you want to?

LAWN TENNIS is the development of a very ancient game, said to be the oldest of all ball games. We took it from the French, as the name reminds us, for "tennis" is only the French word "Tenez!" exclaimed by the server to call attention, just as we say "Play!" or "Serve!" It was at first confined to the kings and nobles, and gradually spread to humbler classes, but has never become a *people's* game in England. Lawn tennis is so called to distinguish it from the game in a closed-in court, still played in several places. The finest close-court in the world is Henry VIII's at Hampton Court.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See page 18.

In the seventies, lawn tennis, in its modern form, took the fancy of the English fashionable world, and in 1877 the All-England Club was established at Wimbledon. Under the auspices of the great M.C.C., this club determined the size and shape of the courts, the rules for scoring, and other details. The championship is competed for annually at Wimbledon, which is still the chief centre of the game. Instead of the score of matches held in 1877, there are now more than four hundred played for the championship. Tennis seems to lend itself to international play, since the gifts required are so varied. Over twenty nationalities compete at Wimbledon, and recently a French player was the champion, attracting thousands of spectators.

It is not within the province of this book to enter into religious questions, and therefore very little can be said about GOLF, which has assumed the status of a religion. Suffice to say that the season begins on the first of January and ends on the thirty-first of December, that golf has a language of its own, both for critical moments in the game and for elaborate description afterwards, that it is recommended to old people by doctors, that it comes from Scotland, and that it is pronounced "gowff" by initiates.

Small ball games, and card games, are too numerous even to mention, and are not specially English. One, however, that has been called "England's most popular indoor game," requires a word or two. That is a GENERAL ELECTION. All the sporting instincts of the whole nation are roused, and bent for once to the same end. So respectable is this sport that the most earnest and puritanical feel that they can join in the

excitement, not only with a clear conscience but with positive virtue, labelled "patriotism." There is nothing political in the affair at all. However much political thinking may be done at other times (not ever very much, for the average Englishman does not really care for either politics or thinking), none is done during an election, but political emotion becomes intense. This is fanned into flame by meetings, canvassing, wearing party colours, heckling (a grand sport), and endless discussion in railway carriages. No one is ever moved a peg by any meeting, discussion, or newspaper article, because the man who looks at any paper or attends a meeting other than his own, is not really playing the game, and keeps out of sight. What used to increase the ferment was the publication of results bit by bit, since this affected the subsequent voting, as no reason or argument could. This help to the sport, however, has been removed by the polling's being fixed to be done all on one day. Of course the secret ballot and laws against bribery and corruption have long put an end to the wild orgies that attended an election in the days of Hogarth, and even the milder ones described by Dickens in *Pickwick*. As soon as the final result is out, the Englishman turns his serious attention far away from politics to the Grand National, the prospects of the shooting season, or what not, for he cares not who governs him, so long as the trains run punctually.

If sport does not actually begin in the cradle, it is evident enough in the nursery. Any grown-up who enters a nursery must on no account be facetious about anything he sees going on. He must either *play*, and observe the rules, or he must be of the Gate, and look on seriously. *Punch* (21 April, 1926) gives a delightful

description of a party of the Guards coming up to the Palace in the Mall, in their grey greatcoats, white belts and bear-skin caps, swinging along to fife and drum. Shortly comes up a force of five small boys, with pink cocked-hats, and green gaiters of folded placards, shouldering broomsticks, marching to *The British Grenadiers* played on a tin whistle. They are met by four privates of the Guards in file with corporal in charge. The party of the pink cocked-hats give the correct salute and, to their infinite joy, the awful corporal of Grenadiers calls out, "Party! . . . Eyes right!" The five bear-skins click to the right and ripple in the breeze till "Eyes front!" relieves the strain, and the armies pass.

There are many small games, some of them of respectable antiquity, played by the poorer children in the streets—such as hop-sotch (a possible relic of Border fights), top-spinning, marbles (with a mystic nomenclature of its own), hoops, conkers and the more modern roller-skating. Now these have their seasons as fixed and immutable as football and cricket. The old expression for the vagaries of fashion—"Tops are in, marbles are out"—is no exaggeration. I cannot give the dates, but no child, however humble his financial circumstances, would be caught playing a game that was not in season.

Just as the Greeks were pre-eminent in thought, the Jews in religion, the Romans in law, and so on, each nation contributing its own peculiar gift to the world, it looks as if England's mission lies in the field of sport. Nor is it so trifling as the earnest-minded may suppose. War has for its chief attraction its element of sport, and if this instinct can have full play in harmless directions, if French policemen can beat the

British bobby at boxing, if the Australians can filch the Ashes from us, if the American yachts can outstrip ours, no ill-feeling is left behind—only a fierce desire to down them next time. Yes, one sees in the sporting spirit a possible solution of a world problem that leagues of nations and missionaries may grapple with in vain. After all, what is life but a huge game? and those play it best who can be beaten with a grin, but refuse to take it lying down.

The number of metaphors derived from sport and games is as striking as in the case of the sea. It would be worth while, if you are interested in language, to make a list of the following examples, add to them while living in England, place opposite each the equivalent metaphor in your own country, and in each case guess the sport or game that has afforded the expression. To increase the difficulty of the last, they have been purposely mixed up.

To kick off. To ride for a fall. To throw up the sponge. To tackle. To play a trump card. To stay the course. Bunkered. A dark horse. Crestfallen. A knock-out blow. To be left at the post. Stymied. It isn't cricket. A blow below the belt. To put your cards on the table. To be in at the death. To shoot a sitting bird. A walk-over. To show your hand. To be floored. To show the white feather. To follow suit. To rise to a suggestion. To hole it in one. Stalemate. Biassed. Stumped. Also ran. To make a bull. The die is cast. Caught out. To be at bay. 'Ware wire. The nineteenth hole. To take off the gloves. To get into one's stride. A long suit. Not in the running. Down and out. The odds are against you. Neck and neck. To shirk your fences. To hoodwink. To jib. To be put through your paces. Riding on the snaffle.

To fall like nine pins. To set the pace. A preliminary canter. To pot the red. To kick over the traces. To beat about the bush. To run with the hare and hunt with the hounds. To badger. To be in the pink.

To what sport was the man addicted who said to an afflicted friend, "Don't make Despair first favourite, 'edge a bit on 'Ope"?"

The word "handicap," which is frequently used metaphorically, has an interesting origin. It is a contraction of "hand in the cap," because places in racing were once decided by lots drawn from a cap. "The deuce!" an expression now used as a mild form of swearing, was originally a term of disgust used by a dicer throwing a "two."

### Books

*Junior Cricket*, by G. W. R. Treadgold (Dent).

*Mike*, by P. G. Wodehouse, would give boys a fair idea of the place of English cricket in schools.

*Cricket*, by P. F. Warner (Dent).

*Fly Fishing*, by Lord Grey (Dent).





## CHAPTER XXXIII

### A LEGAL ODDITY AND A GOVERNMENT ODDITY

A land of settled government,  
A land of just and old renown,  
Where Freedom slowly broadens down  
From precedent to precedent.

THESE familiar lines of Tennyson are apt to puzzle anyone who is not accustomed to the ways of English law. The words "settled government" are misleading in a sense, for it is the very absence of definite settlement that makes our legal arrangements so elastic and adaptable to changing modes of life. The last two lines, however, embody a very definite and peculiar characteristic of England. In spite of the boasted liberty of untrammelled *new* countries, and modern republics and democracies, England is admittedly the country where the greatest freedom is enjoyed. This is owing to the fact that our legal system is not founded on a code—a scheme of laws that have been definitely drawn up. It is based on the *past*, adapted to the present by our judges, the very best and wisest set of men that ever were, when regarded as a whole. They are absolutely free from all suspicion of seeking anything but justice.



Now there are certain principles of justice in England, called the Common Law of England, unwritten, with roots deep in the past of Saxon times, or earlier, modified in Norman times, and being modified at this minute. For example, the eldest son is heir; a man is innocent until he is proved guilty; a deed is not valid till it is "signed, sealed and delivered"; a prisoner is given the "benefit of the doubt." Every case is decided by such ancient rules, and (this is the important point) by cases that have been settled on similar points by former judges. This is called "precedent." Sometimes a case may come up that has not had anything like it for a hundred years or more, and counsel may have to search back to some Plantagenet king to see how to guide the bench. It can be easily seen how this "broadens," for two cases are seldom on all-fours, so that a little bit is continually being added to our idea of the right course to pursue. A case that stands out as definitely adding to the law is called "a leading case." This does not imply an exciting case that attracts the attention of the nation at large (which is called a "cause célèbre"), but it is a case that "leads" a judge in his decisions.

Sometimes, of course, a case may be both leading and a generally interesting one too. I remember such an instance in the Jackson Case. A wife ran away from her husband, for no reason that was specified—she just left him. She went to the house of some friends, and stood a kind of siege from her husband, involving, as well as I remember, food being passed up to her in baskets. It was all very amusing, but when the husband brought the matter into the court, the situation was found to be *unprecedented*. In short, times had changed, and a wife dared to do what in

old days was impossible. Much hung, therefore, on the decision of the judge. It was a great moment for wives, as their future liberty was to depend on it. He found that a husband has no right to detain his wife, if she wishes to leave him. This was a great advance in the idea of freedom, however little it might practically affect the lives of most people. There were some interesting plays resulting from it, such as *Marriage*, by Brandon Thomas, and *The Twelve Pound Look*, by Barrie.

It may be useful to be clear about a few of the commonest legal terms. The *civil* courts settle disputes about claims for injuries, business quarrels, damages for libel, and so forth, while the *criminal* courts deal with offences against the law. Suppose you have had a house built according to a given plan, to be finished by a given time, and the builder has failed to fulfil the *contract*, and you wish "to go to law about it." You go to a *solicitor*. You are called a *client*. The solicitor may be able to settle the matter himself, but if there is any difficult legal point involved, he engages *counsel*, that is a barrister who is versed in the law and will advise him whether he has a good case or not. If the chances are that the *lawsuit* will be lost if brought before a judge, counsel and solicitor do their best to "settle it out of court." If, however, the quarrel is too deep for such a settlement, the case is brought into court to be tried out before the *bench* (or judge). Now you are called the *plaintiff*, and your opponent is called the *defendant*. Counsel on both sides argue the case. The judge decides. In a criminal case, one barrister is called "counsel for the prosecution," and the other, "counsel for the defence." The *jury* is a body of twelve ordinary people, who sit and



LINCOLN'S INN GATEWAY, CHANCERY LANE

listen to all the *evidence*, and have to decide at the end on the *facts*. Did the prisoner steal the jewels or not? They say "Guilty" or "Not guilty," and they must all agree. But they have nothing to say about the law of the matter. Then the judge passes *sentence*, that is, acquits the man if "Not guilty," or states his punishment if "Guilty."

It would puzzle a stranger, or indeed an Englishman, to say how we are governed. We are an old-established Monarchy, but no one supposes that the king "governs" us, in the usual meaning of the term. Again, we are a "Democracy" represented by a Parliament. But no one who has any idea about our parliamentary elections can possibly suppose that the people really govern England. The fewer people engaged on any difficult business, the better it is done, and England is governed by a little committee of Parliament, called the Cabinet. The members of it are the leading public ministers, such as the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Postmaster-General, the President of the Board of Trade. The Cabinet is responsible both to the Sovereign and to Parliament. The members discuss their measures in secret. They must be "all of one mind." They are presided over by the Prime Minister, and if he is a strong character, as he usually is, he is the real governor of England. So after all, we are under a benevolent despotism, tempered by public opinion, to which a wise Prime Minister is duly sensitive, but to which he seldom gives way. Such is the oddity of the English character, that we should think very little of a Prime Minister who *did* give way to popular agitation, even if we ourselves had joined in it.

Like most things in England, it was due to sheer accident that the king is not the president of the

Cabinet. George I. could not speak English, found the meetings an intolerable bore, and left the business to Walpole. He was the first "Prime Minister," and governed England entirely for so many years that the habit of leaving matters in the hands of the chief minister, or "Premier," was established. But legally there is no such office at all. So it comes to this, that the man who manages England has no legal status whatever.

### BOOK

*The English Constitution*, by Lord Courtney. Temple Primer (Dent).

## CHAPTER XXXIV

### NATIONAL JESTS

OF course there is a fashion in jests, as in clothes, in art, in literature. What was known as "the new humour" a year or two ago, now causes wonder at the use of the word "humour" in connection with it at all. But there are certain things that seem to persist through any changes of mood. Apart from the universal provocatives of fun, there are a few that are peculiar to England.

From early times certain places in England have been the butt of the rest. In Victorian days there was a saying, "From Hull, Hell, and Halifax, Good Lord deliver us." The dislike to these places was said to be founded on the disagreeable workhouses at Hull and Halifax. But no foundation is needed for these grim pleasantries. The merry sound of "Tooting" is quite enough to make it a source of fun. Wigan must be seen in order that the joke about it may be appreciated.

The Southern Railway has been a fair target for ribaldry ever since the days when the London Chatham and Dover section of it was known as the Load'em Smash'em and Turnover." The slow rate and unpunctuality are the usual failings to gibe at. A train that came in once two minutes before the scheduled time caused a great sensation, until it was discovered that it was the train of the day before.

A man lies on the rails, intending to commit suicide, which he certainly does, but the death is from starvation. In one year statistics showed that the Southern Railway had lost ten thousand passengers, owing to extension of tram-lines; *Punch* bade them not to be downhearted, for many of them might still find their way home. Quite recently a train was switched on to the wrong line, and instead of putting back, proceeded by a roundabout way (possible enough in this network of lines) to its destination. The fun consisted in the passengers not being in the least aware that the journey had been lengthened by an hour or so. Now the Southern Railway is efficient and pleasant enough; of course some improvements are necessary, but it is probable that the Englishman would rather forgo these improvements than be deprived of his jest. For the matter of that, the jest would probably survive if a band of archangels became directors.

Any opprobrious epithet is seized on and gloried in, to the bewilderment of those who bestow it. Thus, when the Kaiser referred to the first portion of the English army as "contemptible," the name was fastened on as if it were an honour. Napoleon complained that we did not know when we were beaten: he might have added that we did not know when we were disdained.

It is the same spirit of grim humour that makes us see something funny in the income-tax. As we are the most heavily taxed nation under the sun, it might be dangerous if we failed to see the funny side. As it is, we grumble, laugh at the complicated forms and—pay up. Any kind of difficulty seems to have an intoxicating effect on us. During a general strike that

fell upon us for eight days, when many of the volunteer omnibuses were damaged or destroyed, a city clergyman jotted down some of the notices he saw chalked up by the broken windows. He sent them to *The Times* (26 May, 1926). Here are some of them:

"To wring the conductor's neck, pull cord twice."

"Keep your bricks. All windows broken."

"I have no pane now, dear mother."

"The Aerated Bus Company."

"Emergency Exit."

"Charlie's Aunt, still running."

Best of all was this warning: "The Driver of this bus is a Guy's Hospital student. The Conductor is a Guy's Hospital student. The Policeman on the box seat is a Guy's Hospital student. Anyone who throws a brick will soon be a Guy's Hospital patient."

Akin to our amusement at the intricacies of the income-tax forms is the joy over Bradshaw's Railway Guide. But here much depends on the mentality of the reader. English people can be sharply divided into those who can understand Bradshaw, and those who cannot: and the latter are the vast majority. There was the young man who went through it rapidly "to see how it all came out in the end." In an old key to a Lovers' Secret Code, Bradshaw sent by post was to mean "All is confusion." As far back as 1865, *Punch* has a skit on Bradshaw, classifying the trains as: those that start but do not arrive, those that arrive but do not start, those that neither start nor arrive but only "run." A knowledge of Bradshaw is said to be, like a knowledge of billiards, evidence of a misspent youth. But watch the people who take Bradshaw seriously. Ask the advice of one of them as to a cross-country



journey. See how his eyes will light up, how he will seize the guide, muttering for ever so long of junctions and changes, through carriages, slip carriages, "not on Wednesdays," and so forth. Meanwhile another enthusiast will be watching eagerly and jealously, till at last he can contain himself no longer, but snatches the book with a "Let me show you." The weary appearance of a Bradshaw is due entirely to these seizures. Strangers to our railways had better leave an itinerary to one of these people, or else (and far more wisely) get all information from the station inquiry office. If, however, anyone is ambitious to master Bradshaw, let him abstain from reading the "Directions for Using the Guide." These are difficult to find, being modestly tucked away between a list of steamers to Harwich and a few samples of Great Western trains, offered, as it were, on approval.

A peculiar plant, called an aspidistra, whose origin and means of propagation are hidden from us, thrives in suburban villas, and is so hardy that it can go, like a camel, for long periods without water, as for instance when the family is on holiday. It has not the spirit even to die. But it has found a status as a national jest.

A certain make of motor-car, cheap and useful, occasions much merriment to those who own more expensive kinds, and to those who cannot afford a car at all.

Our public statues nearly always provoke ridicule, some more so than others, whether deserving of it or not, such as the Albert Memorial. As a nation we have no genius for sculpture, and are often vaguely aware that there is something wrong with our memorials, without knowing exactly what. So we laugh at them.

England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales are united in every sense, but the characteristics of each are sharply defined enough to be a constant puzzle and source of amusement to the others. The ancient warfare between them is represented in the present day by a warfare of wit.

The Irishman gives peculiar pleasure when he makes a "bull." This is a remark that is perfectly clear to understand, but is absurd as far as the wording goes. For instance: "Next time your train is late, you must come by the one before." "When we cemented in all the rats, a lot of them were left out." "I hear no silence at all." "If you take home everything on the last day, you are sure to leave something behind." A rope was so long in being hauled out of a well, that the Irishman thought the other end had been cut off. His farm was of the kind that the more you improved it the worse it got. He only took sugar in his tea when it could not be had. He takes out a cork by pushing it in. He has an empty bottle full of cold water. He thinks it better to be a coward for a minute than a dead man all his life.

The Scot is in great favour at the present moment as a source of humour. He is a little slow in seeing a joke. He takes life seriously. His country is not so rich as England, and for centuries he has had to work hard to extract a livelihood from a poor soil and a thoroughly ill-tempered climate. Consequently he has been forced to look at every penny. At times this economy reaches absurdity, and tales of it are handed on and improved on, not to say made up. Curiously enough, the Scot himself apparently enjoys these stories, and tells them himself. It was a Scot who asked me if I had heard about the Scot who paid the

taxi-driver sixpence too much. When I said "No," he replied in a melancholy way that no one else had either.

Closely allied to his economy is a Scot's tendency to leave his own country, in order to settle in England. No joke on that subject can beat Dr. Johnson's, who hated Scotchmen wholeheartedly. When the Scottish Boswell was first introduced to him, he nervously faltered, "I come from Scotland, doctor, but I cannot help it." To which came the cutting reply, "None of them ever can."

The Welsh are fully assured that their country is the finest in the world, their language the oldest, their Church the original Christian one in these islands, their blood the best, themselves the most intellectual, their poetry the deepest. All this is true, as you will find if you live there and become one of them intimately. Wales from within is far other than Wales from without.

They always seem like the eternal *children* among the other Britains, lovable on account of their very foibles, their vanities, their exaggerations, and the musical cadence of their speech. Shakespeare depicted the imaginative Welshman in Glendower, putting into his mouth the only bit of absolute poetry in 1 *Henry IV.*, and the lovably ludicrous Welshman in Fluellen. While he failed with the Scot and the Irishman, he has made this Welshman an eternal figure of humour.

Perhaps the chief characteristic of Britain's jests is that they are as bubbles upon the still waters of profound and often painful experience. Among the English-speaking peoples even the vulgarest jokes are best produced in the least promising circumstances,

and are indeed a gallant attempt to laugh when the Fates are against them. As one of our modern writers once suggested, to judge of what a nation holds sacred, look to its Jest.





## L'ENVOI

ENGLAND has many dark spots and many absurdities, but do not cast a final judgment on it till you have listened to a nightingale in a moonlit beech-wood, seen the kingfisher flashing over a trout stream, and felt the sou'-wester in your face on the coast of Cornwall.

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